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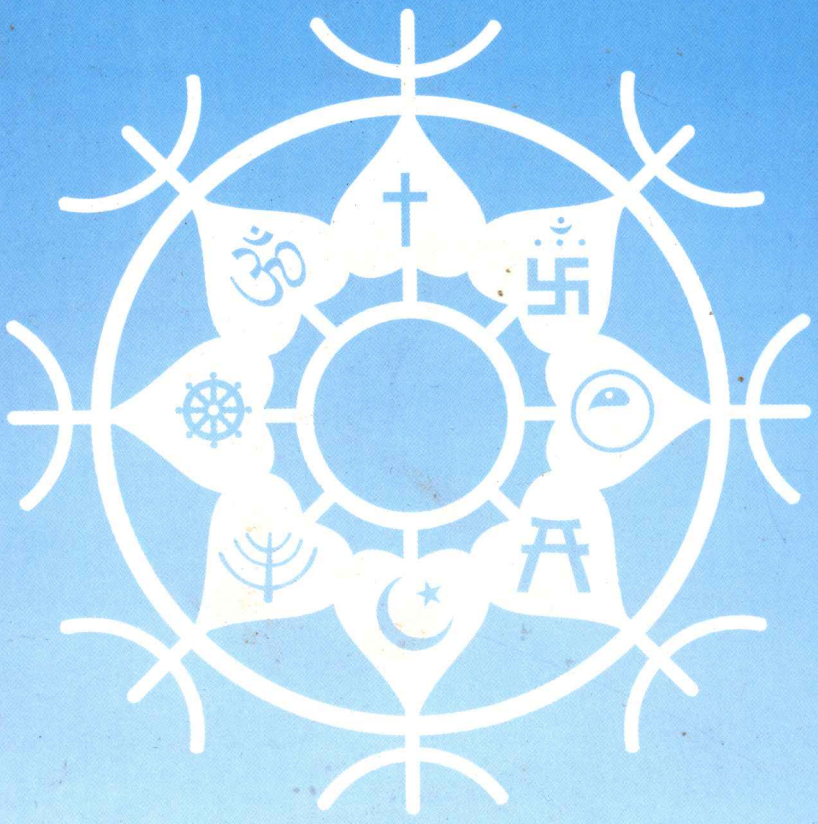

BEING HUMAN: EXPLORATIONS

January-March 2012 Vol. 37, No. 1

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Editorial

KNOW THYSELF AND MEANING OF LIFE

Gnōthi sauton – 'Know Thyself' – is written on the wall of Apollo's temple at Delphi, and those who seek Apollo's guidance should first know themselves before they could seek guidance to their actual situations. For Socrates, and for most philosophers after him, 'the unexamined life is not worth the living' and the most important knowledge to be pursued was self-knowledge. Paradoxically enough, Plato engaged in Dialogues for self-knowledge showing that self-knowledge is gained through others; it is a fundamentally a social form of knowledge. So, for instance, according to Plato, by gazing into the eyes of your lover, you gaze into a window of the self. Rather than the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* – I think, therefore I am – the classical tradition advocated *sumus ergo sum* – we are therefore I am. It is in conversation and collaboration that one would know thy self. The Indian classical tradition identified *atmavidya* (self knowledge) with *brhamavidya* (knowledge of the Absolute), because Reality is one without a second. For St Augustine, 'God alone knows who he truly is' and his prayer was 'Let me know myself and know thee.' More importantly *atmavidya* is seen as *atmasakshatkara* (self-realisation) showing that the question is ontological rather than epistemological; know thyself is actually an invitation to become thyself.

Human persons are embodied subjects with active and passive bodily and spiritual (rational, emotional, volitional, etc.) powers and are substantially and creatively present in the world. We live, move and have our being in the world, both in the natural and the social world. Care is to be taken, however, not to reduce a person into either nature or society. One pattern in the weave is interwoven with many others and one has to see them in the context of the weave of our life. The conceptual clarification throws light on who we are and how we live in conversation and collaboration with fellow human beings. As natural beings 'the world is my world;' as social beings, however, 'the world is our world.' By living in the world, we transform the world and make it a human world. Nature and community are related to each other not just empirically but logically. 'The motto here', following Wittgenstein, 'is always: Take a wider look round.'[1] The current issue of the *Journal of Dharma* on "Being Human: Explorations" presents a wide spectrum of perspectives regarding human subjectivity.

[1]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 127.

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"The Dignity of The Human Person and Co-Responsibility for the Common Good" by Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil contributes towards a right understanding of the human person learning both from the wisdom of the scriptures and sages and contemporary thought on life in the market driven environment. It is a call to work together in the service of humanity, especially in defending the dignity of the human person, in affirming fundamental ethical values, in promoting justice and peace, and in responding to the suffering. Dignity of the human person, according to Archbishop Menamparampil, is the foundation of all human rights and obligations (civic rights, and ethical, social and environmental obligations). We are living in the midst of a situation that tolerate the widening gap between the rich and the poor, caste discrimination, corruption in an outrageously conspicuous fashion, political protests, and bomb blasts. Efficiency and GDP without human concern for each other and for the more fragile communities, commercial exchange without proportionate advantage to the weaker partner, hidden dishonesty and violence without a sense of guilt, flexibility of principles that amounts to relativization of truths and values. Justice must ultimately place itself at the service of the community, which means at the service of love. Both rights and duties need to combine in the right manner to promote the common welfare of the human person. According to the author, there is an urgent need for collaborating across Cultures, Traditions and Religions as inter-religious and inter-cultural conversations have assisted mutual understanding, helped to resolve problems and generated a desire for the development of an interfaith ethic. He also refers to some of the themes in which the Catholic and Hindu perspectives specially agree: spiritual search, religious depth, renunciation, austerity, monasticism, purity, simplicity, and silence.

Shankar B. Chandekar, in his article, "Principles of Management and the Bhagavad Gita" presents an outstanding contribution of the Gita to the Modern Management Science, with the principles of managing oneself and managing human resources rather than managing the raw materials, finances, infrastructure and other external factors. The *Gita* develops and presents a profound theory of *Purushottama Yoga* in which the harmony between the individual and the universe (*samatvam yoga uchyate*) is emphasised. Performing *Svakarma* (selfless action) in unison with this *Atma Yoga* is excellence in action. This wisdom and vision when properly understood, digested and transformed into action can really help us to provide effective and efficient management, creative and innovative managers and enlightened leadership, which is the need of the day.

Dr. Rekha M. Chennattu presents the Christian understanding of the dignity of women based on the biblical presentation of women and their rightful place in society as human persons. The Paper, "Dignity of Women: Christian Perspectives" begins with a reflection on the creation stories in the Bible (Genesis 1-2) and women's role in Salvation History as God's partners in the Old Testament. It is followed by an analysis of the New Testament women in the stories of Jesus as well as the attitude of Saint Paul towards women. These biblical episodes uphold the dignity of women as created in God's image and likeness. After examining the teaching of the Church Dr. Rekha concludes the paper with the Gender Policy of the Catholic Church, a document issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). In the present context of ever increasing alienation and brokenness in the world, a more dynamic partnership between men and women and an inclusive leadership can be a transforming grace in the life and mission of the Church.

Ubuntu/Hunhu is an African vision of life that privileges humanness and interconnectedness of persons based on people's lived experiences. Irene Muzvidziwa and Victor N. Muzvidziwa in their paper, "*Hunhu* (*Ubuntu*) and School Discipline in Africa," argue that there is a strong link between *hunhu* and school leadership, school culture and academic achievement and school effectiveness. Hence the focus on teaching, learning and professional development needs to be grounded on *ubuntu/hunhu.* The paper also shows that *hunhu* is linked to positive and/or negative school discipline. The absence of *hunhu* leads to human factor decay. The paper argues strongly for the need to understand the link between school leadership and *hunhu.*

Transgenderism is perceived as natural and therefore divinely ordained, according to Islamic tradition in Malayasia, though it is a complex phenomenon that needs explanations considering biological, environmental, and social factors. A group of scholars from the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia critically analyzed the acceptance level of the transgender persons in the society and most importantly, comparing the perception from Islamic views *vis-a-vis* the transgender and society members. The data was gathered via interviews with the transgenders, Islamic religious authorities and fellow University students. Though the transgender persons feel that their nature is innate, the Malysian government and public at large judge them as responsible for their behaviour and charge them with 'indecent behaviour.' With Islam being the official religion of the country, most of the transgenders' lives

are also challenged by the enforcement of the religious edicts by the police and the Islamic authority. The article contends that though the prevailing religious beliefs and social ethos reject transgenderism, construing it as an abominable act to God and public humiliation in general, transgender individuals are human beings like any other citizens and they deserve the basic human rights to live in the society.

The explorations on human subjectivity conclude with a Wittgensteinian interpretation of human subjectivity: "The Person: Project of Nature, Nurture and Grace." The author presents human beings as rooted in nature, formed by nurture and sustained by God; positively they act upon the world, build up the community and move towards God. The methodology is Wittgensteinian, that of assembling reminders, criss-crossing the terrain, and providing an *Übersicht* of the person from a religious perspective. It is neither claimed that this is a general thesis that philosophy can establish nor a point of view that Wittgenstein himself held; rather this is how Wittgenstein's philosophical investigations stimulated the author to thoughts of his own. This is, to use a Wittgensteinian expression, a form of life: how we live, move and have our being.

Being Human: Explorations, thus, presents an album of sketches on human beings and their life perspectives. Though the authors persuasively argue for their respective positions, none of the sketches are expected to be exclusive and independent; they have family resemblances showing different ways of being human and finding meaning in life. Ultimately the imperative Know Thyself is intimately related with the question on the meaning of life.

Jose Nandhikkara, *Chief Editor*

Journal of Dharma 37, 1 (January-March 2012), 7-26

DIGNITY OF HUMAN PERSON AND CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Thomas Menamparampil♦

1. Towards a Right Understanding of the Human Person

"God, give us wisdom as a father gives wisdom to his sons.
May we live and have light." (*Rig Veda* 7,32,26)

By 2020 India will have the biggest working force in the world: young, gifted, dynamic, and energetic. If they will be creative, well-motivated, and forward-looking, there is no limit to what they will be able to achieve for the nation and contribute to the world. If, on the contrary, they happen to be disoriented, divided, unmotivated, unemployed and unemployable, they will be potential revolutionaries, insurgents, and radicals of every sort. If they will not able to cohere together and agree on basic values in keeping with human dignity, society will be heading for major troubles. We are already beginning to experience some of them. With the rise of new economic possibilities we also notice weakening of accountability and serious damage to the environment. These are times for a deeper reflection.

In this period of fast changes, radical ideologies of the Right or of the Left can lead people who feel aggrieved to extreme positions, and there can be violent reactions in response. In such a climate of strong ideologies, explosive self-expressions become more and more acceptable, and normal. Even a society like ours that used to place high ideals before itself can lose self-control and move in the direction of communal violence, unrestrained forms of protests, Machiavellian style of state-functioning, sharkish methods in the market place, and hedonistic consumerism in private life. This is a moment in which we need to propose a radical choice for life, ethical values, an attitude of co-responsibility, self-imposed limits to the overuse of natural resources, and the protection of the environment. We need to build up an ethical sturdiness based on the right understanding of the human person in order to take on these and similar challenges that lie ahead. Our inner self needs to be awakened and a sense of responsibility aroused.

♦**Archbishop Dr. Thomas Menamparampil** is widely known and respected for his scholarship and commitment to social work and more particularly for his peace-building initiatives in the North-East region of India. A scholar in History, Theology and Anthropology, he has written several books and articles on various and social and religious issues. He is frequently invited for various international seminars and conferences to talk on subjects related to culture and theology.

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2. A Call to Work Together in the Service of Humanity

"*It is with united effort that good deeds can be done.*" (*Atharva Veda* 20,128,12)

Benedict XVI recently encouraged "working together in the service of humanity, especially in defending the dignity of the human person, in affirming fundamental ethical values, in promoting justice and peace, and in responding to the suffering"[1] and ensuring the equitable distribution of resources and safeguarding of creation. In a few words, he summarized some of the greatest challenges of our times. It has become the duty of persons from different cultural and religious traditions to come together in a common effort to take up these burning issues and contribute unitedly towards building up a better world. In discussing these diverse human concerns, we must emphasize that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all human rights and obligations (civic rights, and ethical, social and environmental obligations).

3. The Dignity of the Human Person

"*The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings.*" (*Gita* XVIII, 61)

Dignity of the human person derives from:

i) human *nature*
ii) the responsible *role* human beings plays in the Universe
iii) the greatness of the *destiny* to which human beings are called.

Nearly all traditions agree that in the human being, with the intellectual powers, the cosmic order touches a high point. He/she is the epitome of all that has come into existence. He/she is a veritable microcosm, identifying him/herself with the whole of existing reality.

At the same time, the human being is a paradox; though bound to the earth by the bodily nature with all its limitations, he/she transcends the earth because he/she can think, speak, communicate, acquire knowledge, play a responsible role, make free moral choices and realize his/her destiny. He/she is the meeting place of both (body-spirit, time-eternity). Those who accept evolution see the Universe becoming conscious of itself in the human being. St. Thomas Aquinas held human beings as the fulfilment of the entire cosmos.[2]

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[1]Benedict XVI, "World Day of Peace," 1.1.2011, no. 12.
[2]Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3.78.

4. A Christian Understanding of the Human Person, His/Her Dignity

"*When God created human beings, He made them like himself.*" (*Genesis* 5:1)

Christian belief in this regard may be phrased in this manner briefly:

i) God created human beings in His own image and likeness (nature)

ii) he/she is the steward of all of creation (role)

iii) he/she is called to eternal happiness with God Himself (destiny).

Human beings originate from God (not through emanation, but creation); they are destined to return to Him (not for dissolution, but fellowship).

God created human beings in His own image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1; Gen 9:5-6). He made them spiritual personalities, embodied spirits, conversation partners. He reaches out to them with His message of love, and expects a response in similar fashion. In fact, He has made them His very own children (John 1:12; Romans 8:17). By giving them the capacity to make free choices (capacity for self-determination), He invites them to play a responsible role in ordering their own life and the potentialities of other creatures towards their destiny. The psalmist says, "You made him inferior only to yourself; you crowned him with glory and honour. You appointed him ruler of everything you made; you placed him over all creation" (Psalms 8:5-6). The human beings are called to intimate fellowship with Him and are destined for His company. They become truly human when they tend to God and serve divine purpose.

The Catholic Church always upheld human dignity. In *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII says: "Justice demands that the dignity of human personality be respected in them (workers)" (n. 31). They have a right to a meaningful job. "No one may with impunity outrage the dignity of man, which God himself treats with great reverence..." (n. 57).

Pope John XXIII in his *Mater et Magistra* speaks of the right to health services, education, training, housing, labour, leisure, recreation (n. 61). His *Pacem in Terris* speaks of the lofty dignity of the human person which implies rights and duties (n. 9-10). It emphasizes the social character of human dignity.

Pope Paul VI in his *Populorum Progressio* speaks of the Church's commitment to human dignity.

Pope John Paul II, in *Laborem Exercens*, affirms that human dignity is linked to his transcendent destiny. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* shows how the human person is at the centre of all social, economic and political concerns of society. In *Centesimus Annus*, he refers to the 'transcendent dignity' of the human person.

Gaudium et Spes quotes the Psalms 8:5-6 referring to the greatness of the human being. "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour: thou hast set him over the works of thy hands, thou hast subjected all things under his feet" (n. 12).

5. Human Failure, Redemption through Christ

> "*What is man that you are mindful of him?*
> *What is this strange mystery about my nature?*
> *I am great and small, high and low, mortal and immortal, of earth and of heaven, I must be buried with Christ and rise with him again, be co-heir with Christ, become a son of God and indeed God himself.*" (St Gregory Nazianzen, *Or* 7, 23)

Ecologists may find the above description of the human being too anthropocentric and triumphalistic. Our aim is not to exalt the human being, but discover his rightful role in the overall destiny of the Universe. We Christians admit that everything has not been well with humankind. He has been inwardly damaged through his own failure (sin). He stood in need of the spiritual restoration (redemption) that Christ accomplished through his saving work and the gift of his Life. But healed and restored the human being can fulfil his mission on earth as a co-worker with his Creator, caring for creation as a diligent steward, and leading things to their destiny through his own personal effort, inner renewal and uprightness of life (2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 7:22; Ephesians 3:16).

6. Towards a Sense of Moral Responsibility

For this, the human being must make himself equal to the task, healing and transforming whatever is not right in his personal life, in the social order, and in the created Universe, to the extent that is possible for him. For, woundedness remains in him still, in society and in the cosmic order. The dignity of the human person reveals itself most of all in contributing of his own free choice to the re-ordering of all things towards their destiny in God.

This challenge of making the right choice with a sense of responsibility opens up the entire realm of ethics and morality, the mission of humanizing the world and filling every sphere of activity (work, technology, art) with the spirit. In so doing he develops nature and himself. The limitations in the world that we notice show, not that it is a reality in ruins, but that it is rich in potentiality to be realized partly by its internal dynamisms and partly by man's rational action. Thus, creation itself benefits from Christ's saving work: "All of creation waits with eager longing for God" (Romans 8:19-21). And humans contribute to this cause.

Every human action is relevant to ordering things to their destiny. Meanwhile he himself grows in grace and fullness.

Dignity of the human person confers dignity on things that are related to him/her. So we speak of the dignity of marriage, dignity of work, dignity of human endeavour, the values of human culture; the dignity of family life, the dignity of the child, the dignity of the dying destitute.

7. Relevance of These Apparently Abstract Concepts

> "*God has created a natural distrust for falsehood and trust for truth.*" (*Yajur Veda* 16,77)

These words about human destiny with reference to God may sound like a list of irrelevant philosophical statements and pious thoughts to persons who have a pragmatic outlook. But when one reads of the tragedies of the Holocaust, Hiroshima, Gulag archipelago, Mao's Cultural Revolution and Pol Pot's 'killing fields', we realize how each person acts according to his framework of thought (ideology or foundational beliefs). If it corresponds to truth and reality, his contribution will be constructive and useful; if, on the contrary imbalanced, utopian or aggressive, the results will be bound to be disastrous. Right notions, then, are important.

Even as of now, can we claim that we are handling social issues of the day in a manner in keeping with the dignity of the human person: e.g. Human Rights, treatment of religious minorities, religious freedom, rights of smaller ethnic groups, care for the marginalized, expression of dissent, use of force, differences of opinion, or politics of protests? We are living in the midst of a situation that tolerate the widening gap between the rich and the poor, caste discrimination, corruption in an outrageously conspicuous fashion, political protests, and bomb blasts. At global level, we are faced with the reality of the violence of the strong against the weak, and the violence of the weak in response. How far are we able to bring an awareness of the Dignity of Person and value of human lives in such contexts?

8. Human Brokenness and Potentiality

If expediency is law (Macchiavelli), might becomes right (Hobbes). Christian convictions recoil before such proposals. If humanity seeks to work out solutions all on its own independently of moral law and divine precepts, we are sure to stumble. Distancing oneself from God in a proud claim of autonomy and ignoring His life-enhancing design, the human being falls into a helpless state (as history has repeatedly shown), and life becomes too hard to bear. He may feel as though he is a 'being unto death' (Heidegger) or an absurd object (Sartre). Such feelings of despair in the

mouths of 'existentialist philosophers' sounded exaggerated, but such voices gave evidence to the agony of the human situation and the humbling experience of one's inherent fragilities.

Christians recognize this fragility and this inner brokenness. For sure, the human being is not a Superman (Nietzsche); nor is he merely a form of organized matter (Marx). He remains a child of God despite his human frailties (John 1:12) and keeps struggling towards his destiny (2 Corinthians 10:3; Philippians 1:27), which is to become sharers in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Indians readily agrees with the words of Jesus like "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30), or "The Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:38), "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11). "When that day comes, you will know that I am in my Father and that you are in me, just as I am in you" (John 14:20). The close relationship of the personal 'self' with the Ultimate Self is a theme that stands at the heart of all the main Indian traditions.

Human beings then are a supreme value. All other things are only means contributing to the human person's development, whether they be capital, science, or industry. Consequently they are not value-free or neutral. In tomorrow's society, the human factor becomes even more central; it will not be capital and material resources that will decide the future but the 'human capital'. Because of this, human beings must also become humane, combining self-interest with altruism, self-assertion with solidarity and generosity.

9. One Will Have to Pay the Price for Irresponsibility

If, on the contrary, the human being is no more than accident in nature as some thinkers have proposed (a 'casino view' of reality), everything becomes different. Whatever suits one is valid and legitimate. If the sole moral principle is one's own convenience (pleasure, personal fulfilment, hunger for status, for power or the accumulation of wealth), the door opens fully for an ethic of selfishness and greed and ardent consumerism. Today, with the possibility for abundance within reach, not a few seem to be eager to go even beyond what the traditional Utilitarians dreamt of (Bentham, Mill, Locke, and Hume): everything that is possible or fanciful is legitimate.

Irresponsibility has consequences. World history shows that even the most advanced nations and most glamorous civilizations paid the price for handling their success irresponsibly. They worked their way to exhaustion and decline when the leadership lacked responsibility and society played

politics and economics without a moral vision. It may be happening even in our own days. It remains a warning for us. Efficiency and GDP without human concern for each other and for the more fragile communities, commercial exchange without proportionate advantage to the weaker partner, hidden dishonesty and violence without a sense of guilt, flexibility of principles that amounts to relativization of truths and values.

We will need to do a lot of soul-searching to evaluate how our society handles its assets built on the temporary advantage of cheap labour. Will these hard-won resources be wasted on self-flattering ventures: in projects of display, arms race, out-of-proportion space projects, while neglecting social welfare programmes in aid of the poorer sections of the people, like drinking water, literacy, health care, malaria eradication programmes, assistance to women and children, modest housing, environment protection? When we become insensitive to the needs and dignity of others as human persons, it will not take us a long time before we lower ourselves to less than human levels, descending from the rational to the sensual, then to the monstrous: degradation of the human body, addiction to excesses of drugs and alcohol, insensitive abortion, experimenting with the human embryos and manipulating human heredity.

10. Measuring Advantages against Consequences

"*The true seems often false, the false seems true;*
appearances deceive, so think it through." (*Panchatantra*)

If, in such sensitive areas, Christian convictions stand in favour of life, balance, respect, moderation, responsibility and human dignity, it is not resistance to new ideas, it is rather a sign of their commitment to human dignity, people's welfare, and values that assure a future to humanity. Promoters of technological research should accept responsibility for the consequences of their proposals when they are on the verge of being reckless. There is something like 'preventive ethics' when it comes to experimentation (atomic technology and gene technology). Those who make their voices of caution heard in such situations are doing a service to society. Those who command communication networks, stock markets, genetic engineering, and national planning need to hear messages eliciting a deep sense of responsibility. Profit-making strategies can be acceptable only if they are ethically sound, socially sensitive, and ecologically alert.

11. Rights of Human Beings

It is in this context that we study the rights of human beings. A person's rights are not primarily concerned about profit, property, or exchange, but

about his dignity; about the person and not about his goods. They are about a person's moral claim for attaining what is legitimate to him. Historically, rights became important in the context of the absolute power claimed by the government (state, king, elected government, dictator), or theories like might is right. Among rights may be mentioned: the right to life; the freedom of conscience and religion, the freedom to choose religion; freedom of expression and action, freedom of press, assembly, association; the freedom to work towards his final end according to his own convictions; to follow his vocation, to educate his children; right to sufficient material wealth for a proper domestic life; right to employment, private possessions; right to work, good name, education, information; to spiritual and cultural development, good government; equality before law.

It is important to remember that the claim of justice and rights by the individual does not end with himself/herself as the final goal. Justice must ultimately place itself at the service of the community, which means at the service of love. Justice often seeks to give the minimum, while love strains itself to offer the maximum. Love responds to the actual needs of the individual and the community, and even goes beyond, suspending one's own rights. Love is a supreme law.

12. A Search for Ethical Choices

Both rights and duties need to combine in the right manner to promote the common welfare of the human person. It is for this reason that the ability to make choices that are ethical and life-enhancing has become the most pressing need of the day. We have to learn to work out some sort of consensus, too, in order to join hands together with others of various persuasions in a common endeavour. In crisis we know how to do that. For example, on occasions of great tragedies like that of the Tsunami or the destruction of the Twin towers, people sank their differences and reflected more profoundly on the serious dimensions of their human identity: the preciousness of human life, the meaning of human existence on earth, a shared responsibility in working out our common destiny. Is it possible to ask similar questions in more normal times as well?

The lives lost at the Twin Towers were not more precious than those lost in bomb blasts in London, Madrid or Bali; those lost in revolutionary movements in Russia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Germany or Hungary; in ethnic conflicts in the Balkans; in the war and violence in Iraq or Afghanistan; in communal conflicts, farmers' suicides, dowry deaths, hasty abortions, or female infanticide. Why do we not try to do something

about coming to aid of the weak and helpless in such contexts? Why do we fail to work out a consensus to address such daunting problems?

When Mother Teresa came to the rescue of the man dying alone in the streets and the newborn child in the dump-heap, what she was saying was precisely that they were human persons even at the moment of their utmost wretchedness and deserved our love, respect and care. It was Christian belief in the dignity of the human person translated into life. She was showing that religion gives a depth dimension to the human search for solutions to the most intractable social problems, that it can evoke generosity and commitment with an unconditionality and absoluteness and that nothing else can, and that it promotes supreme values most cherished by humans. This shows that it is the exaggerated claims of 'modernity' which sought to humiliate religion that are suffering 'devaluation' today, not religion itself (Jurgen Habermas).

13. The Difficulty of Reaching a Consensus in a Multicultural Society

Due to global commerce, mass migration and travelling habits of people, and the expanding reach of the communications network, we are compelled to live in a culturally and religiously pluralistic society in almost every part of the world. In this context, how do we join hands with neighbours of other beliefs in defending human dignity and in handling problems in society, like growing violence, crime, dishonesty, AIDS, drugs? On what terms do we come together with people who have another understanding of what is right, good, polite, dignified, beautiful or appropriate? Are there ways of transcending inter-community misunderstandings and tensions, basing ourselves on the values still surviving in communities rescued from various civilizational traditions? Will a few more self-help books and personality development courses suffice? Or, will better self-presentation, winning manners, and improved norms of civility serve the purpose? Or do we need go deeper and accept the truth that certain things are conducive to social growth and certain things are not, that there are things that are right that need to be done and there are things that are wrong that ought not to be done in view of the common good?

14. An Inclination of the Heart

"*May I never be guilty of an impious act.*" (*Atharva Veda* 5,3,4)

No doubt, there is a certain amount of pessimism in the air in a fast emerging pluralistic world. The feeling is that philosophers and saints have devoted lifetimes to study and debate without resolving the issue of a

universal human ethics.[3] This is one of the problems with which the Indian mind had wrestled for centuries. In the ancient epic *Mahabharata* we meet with characters who, unlike the Greek heroes, discuss the morality of war even in the midst of the battle. Bhishma, the wise man, finally concludes, "*Dharma* (uprightness) is subtle."[4] Yudhishthira keeps questioning *dharma* till the very end of the story.[5]

Despite such evident difficulties when things go wrong or argument takes the wrong direction, we realize that people in different eras and civilizations have always thought that there are some things ethically right and socially becoming, while others are not. They felt convinced that there was a natural desire in human hearts to do what is right. The great Indian poet Kalidasa referred to the 'inclination of the heart of a good person' as a reliable guide in such matters.[6] Manu, the Indian lawgiver, thought that satisfaction of the mind was one important criterion for evaluating moral choices.[7] However, moral guidance cannot be a dictate from the world of emotions; it should be binding, but at the same time liberating and empowering. For, even hard-core capitalists, who seem to be totally indifferent to spiritual realities, feel the need for the protection of law and the mutuality of contracts in order to continue their business.[8] Everyone is going to benefit from shared ethical principles.

15. Collaboration across Cultures, Traditions and Religions

> "*Be united; speak in harmony; let your minds apprehend alike; common be your prayer; common be the end of your assembly; common be your resolutions; common be your deliberations; unified be your hearts; common be your intentions; perfect be your unity.*" (*Rig Veda* 10,191,24)

In this area there is an urgent need for collaborating across cultures and religious traditions. If Martin Luther King, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Thich Nhat Hanh could join hands together in Civil Rights and Peace initiatives, people of different beliefs and identities can share the common ethic of human dignity, human rights, and human liberation. All they have to do is to accept and respect the core ethical values common to different

[3]John Dalla Costa, *The Ethical Imperative*, Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1998, xii.

[4]Gurucharan Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009, 46.

[5]Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, 281.

[6]Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, 48.

[7]Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, 48.

[8]Dalla Costa, *The Ethical Imperative*, 5.

traditions which are to be found in various forms within various cultural heritages. People who believe in dialogue and collaboration will want to work together with people of other faiths continually following commonly accepted principles. When they work closely with them, they notice that there is wide common ground that can be shared, and that people are willing to widen it further. In recent years inter-religious conversations have assisted mutual understanding, helped to resolve problems and generated a desire for the development of an interfaith ethic.

Certainly there are some broad principles that would find ready acceptance anywhere in the world. For example, Dhammapada taught: "to avoid evil, to cultivate good, and to purify one's mind" (verse 183). Buddha's 'Middle Way' suggested living a sane, moderate and balanced life. People everywhere have valued: good judgement, friendship, loyalty, compassion, gratitude, generosity, sympathy, family affection, and the most important principle that one should never use others as a means. People of every ethnic group, political affiliation, rank or position are open to rational truths, welcome dignified codes of conduct, and retain optimism about the wisdom of the world community concerning the common good.

Even societies considered most 'primitive' have the idea of right, wrong, evil, duty, and justice. They treasure social values and approve of reasonable and dignified behaviour among its members. They consider the approval of society very important. They have profound convictions about honesty, reciprocity, and sharing. They generally follow monogamy and have faith in one Supreme God. Often there is no difference between primitive and civilized societies in basic matters of ethics. The simplest hunters have already developed a full-fledged moral system. This leaves no room for relativism. Universal values are absolutes.

16. Collective Responsibility for Persuading Each Other

> "*Learn thou this by discipleship, by investigation and by service. The wise seers of the essence of things will instruct thee in wisdom.*" (*Bhagavad Gita* IV,34)

Convergences in moral perceptions are becoming evident across cultures, religions, ranks and positions.[9] However, if the global ethic proposed by a

[9]Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "Politics and diplomacy should look to the *moral and spiritual patrimony* offered by the great religions of the world in order to acknowledge and affirm universal truths, principles and values which cannot be denied without denying the dignity of the human person... It means acting in a responsible way on the basis of an objective and integral knowledge of the facts; it means

dominant community in a country is ethno-centric and self-serving, it will surely be resisted by other communities. In the same way, a vague pluralism or crass pragmatism that leads to relativism in religious faith, morality, and values, would be unacceptable. If, on the contrary, the ethical principles proposed assist people to find a common moral ground for daily living, most people would be happy to profit from them.[10]

In order to achieve that, we ought to bring sincerity to our moral search and combine an intuitive moral sensibility and ethical alertness to the pluralistic situation in which we have to live. What seems to be missing today, however, is a readiness on the part of many to take collective responsibility for persuading each other to accept at least some broad ethical norms for the common good.

Pope Benedict XVI says: "... new generations can build on the knowledge and experiences of those who went before, and they can draw upon the moral treasury of the whole of humanity" (*Spe Salvi* 24). If anyone seeks to lead a community to what is good refers to their religious and cultural traditions, their wise men and their sacred writings, his words will have greater convincing power. When we want to evoke the good will of any person or a community, the most intelligent thing to do is to consult the collective psyches and consciences of those communities and profit from the values cherished in their cultures and civilizations. It is our eagerness to tap the common ethical resources of humankind for the common good; for, they belong to the whole of humanity.

17. Closeness in Ethical Convictions

> *"Listen, and I will teach you what wise men have said.*
> *Study their teachings, and you will be glad if your remember them and can quote them."* (*Proverbs* 22:17)

In this section, I would like to refer to some of the themes in which the Catholic and Hindu perspectives specially agree: spiritual search, religious depth, renunciation, austerity, monasticism, purity, simplicity, silence. Out of many others, I have identified three areas for special reflection: 1) Love

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deconstructing political ideologies which end up supplanting truth and human dignity in order to promote pseudo-values under the pretext of peace, development and human rights; it means fostering an unswerving commitment to base positive law on the principles of natural law" (Benedict XVI, "World Day of Peace," 1.1.2011, n.12).

[10]William Schweiker, *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2008, 135.

and Co-belonging, 2) Honesty and Truthfulness, and 3) Respect for Life, Nature, and Environment.

17.1. Love and Co-Belonging

Love for others stands at the heart of all ethical codes. Every culture has some way of saying that we ought to do to others what we would like others to do to us. This is a powerful message in an age of intense cultivation of self-interest and absolute commitment to profit-making.

We love each other because we are convinced that we belong to each other. Affirmation of community loyalty runs right through much of Asian literature. "Meet together, speak together, let your minds be of one accord... May your counsel be common, your assembly common, common the mind, and the thoughts... Let your aims be common, and your hearts be of one accord, and all of you of one mind, so you may live well together" (*Rig Veda* 10.191.2-4). Irrespective of caste and creed, the following virtues are held in high regard: patience, liberality, self-control, nonviolence, sympathy, freedom from anger. Ahimsa means much more than nonviolence; it stands for abstention from causing injury to any living being and inconveniencing any person in any manner. People like Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore, spoke for the human race as one, as did Buddha, Asoka and others in their times.

Togetherness and harmony are strongly urged "Let us have concord with our own people, and concord with people who are strangers to us... May we unite in our minds, unite in our purposes, and not fight against the divine spirit within us" (*Atharva Veda* 7.52.1-2). How similar are these sentiments to what the psalmist says, "How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live together in harmony!" (Psalms 133:1). There are many other virtues of common interest. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna teaches:

> Fearlessness, purity, determination in the discipline of knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of sacred lore, penance, honesty; nonviolence, truth, absence of anger, disengagement, peace, loyalty, compassion for creatures, lack of greed, gentleness, modesty, reliability; brilliance, patience, resolve, charity, absence of envy and of pride; these characterize a man born of divine traits (16:1.4).

For Christians, love is central. Leviticus 19:18 said, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Jesus taught: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do to them" (Matthew 7:12). He insisted we must go beyond what is due, even beyond what the other person expects from us. "When a man takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well" (Luke 6:29). He tells us not to entertain harsh thought, not to use a hard word; to take the initiative for

reconciliation even in cases when it is the other person who has taken the initiative for quarrel (Matthew 5:22-23). He proposes that we invite the unjust aggressor to do even more injustice to us, offering him the other cheek (Matthew 5:39). And after that Jesus asks us to love him, and continue to love him still when he continues to harass and persecute us, since God himself loves him (Matthew 5:44). This is a teaching that Mahatma Gandhi tried to take into the political field. This is not free license given to the rest of society to exploit the Christian believer. It is, on the contrary, God's own personal invitation given for heroic love.

> Care for the poor is a central message in most civilizations:
> When you harvest your fields, do not cut the corn at the edges of the fields, and do not go back to cut the ears of corn that were left. Do not go back through your vineyard to gather grapes that were missed or to pick up the grapes that have fallen; leave them for poor people and foreigners (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Exodus teaches: "You shall not murder, You shall not steal" (20:13). According to Leviticus "You shall not defraud your fellow beings. You shall not commit robbery" (19:13). When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him (Leviticus 19:33). The wages of a labourer shall not remain with you until morning (Leviticus 19:13). "Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice. Aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan. Defend the cause of the widow" (Isaiah 1:17).

17.2. Honesty and Truthfulness

The book of Leviticus says, "Do not cheat anyone by using false measures of length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures" (19.35-36). In an era when corruption is moving into the highest places – governments, bureaucracies, legislatures, judiciary, law-enforcing machinery, pollution-controlling agencies, customs departments, immigration offices, official and open markets – the above message from Leviticus is most relevant. Fake goods of every kind are on sale; duplicate goods of every variety are available: books, DVDs, imitation machinery with substandard parts; adulterated medicines, spurious drugs; endangered species, fragile human beings (women for sex, children for sweatshops), human corpses, live organs (like kidneys) for transplant; even machine guns, and rocket launchers! Whatever can be copied or imitated is available. "Do not cheat anyone by using false measures of length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures" (Leviticus 19:35-36).

Centuries ago the Upanishads had taught "Truth alone triumphs and not untruth" (*Mundaka Upanishads* III,1,6). Kabir used to say: "Better to be

cheated than cheat others." And Vivekananda taught: "Society must be moulded by truth." It is a great mission today to work for probity in public life.

The globalized world provides the anonymity and distances that illegal traffickers need to keep their business invisible. Internet contacts have furthered their possibilities. The deregulation policy that most governments have adopted has weakened the law-enforcing machinery, and illicit traders keep hopping between jurisdictions. International terrorism follows the track of international illicit trade, using the same techniques and facilities. Those who deal in illegal arms keep backing regular criminals, terrorists, urban rioters, political protesters, communal radicals, and secessionists.

17.3. Respect for Life, Nature, and Environment

Reverence for life at every stage of its development is a theme that runs right through the heart of every Asian tradition. Nonviolence constitutes a core value in Hindu tradition. The Asian soul instinctively recoils before abortion, euthanasia, excessive tampering with nature in human re-production, violence to animal and vegetative life.

For the Vedic Aryans, nature was the symbol of the divine: sun, wind, ocean, earth, soil, mountains, forests, springs, etc.

> O Mother Earth! Sacred are thy hills, snowy mountains, and deep forests. Be kind to us and bestow upon us happiness. May you be fertile, arable, and nourisher of all. May you continue supporting people of all races and nations. May you protect us from your anger (natural disasters). And may no one exploit and subjugate your children (*Atharva Veda* 12.1.11).

The farmer prays fervently that the hurt he inflicts on nature may speedily be healed. "Whatever I dig up of you, O earth, may you of that have quick replenishment" (*Atharva Veda* 12, 1.64). "The earth is the mother, and I the son of the earth" (*Atharva Veda* 12.12). "What, O earth, I dig out of thee, quickly shall that grow again: may I not, O pure one, pierce thy vital spot, and not thy heart" (*Atharva Veda* 12.35).

The *Yajnavalkyasmriti* says, "If any man has cut a tree, a thicket, a creeper or a shrub, he should recite one hundred Vedic verses. If a man is guilty of recklessly cutting a medicinal plant, he should subsist on milk for one day" (2.276). Herbal medicines were very popular. "The earth is a garden, the Lord its gardener, cherishing all, none neglected" (Sikhism, *Adi Granth, Majh Ashtpadi*, 1, M.3, p 118).

We can never forget that *Buddha* was enlightened under a tree. Wise men in India those days retired to the forest in order to meditate. The

Himalayas were a sacred destination. Asia's ancient educational centres were *Ashrams* which were always located on the margins of forests. *Tagore's Shantiniketan* sought to recapture this spirit of closeness to nature. For him, trees were prayers and they spoke about God. "Silence, my soul," he wrote in *Gitanjali*, "these trees are my prayers." And he went on, "I asked the tree, speak to me about God, and it blossomed." The Psalmist expresses similar sentiments in many places. He invites the trees of the forest to shout for joy (Psalm 96:12).

It is good to remember that "The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord; the earth and all who live on it are his" (Psalm 24:1), and that we need to take care of vegetation. Wait for a period of time before you eat fruits from the tree you have planted; Leviticus 19:23-25 said, "When you come into the land of Canaan and plant any kind of fruit tree…in the fifth year you may eat the fruit. If you do this, your trees will bear more fruit."

18. Religiosity, the Sense of the Sacred

"My prayer is that our fellowship with you as believers will bring about a deeper understanding of every blessing which we have in our life in union with Christ." (*Philemon* 6)

Amazingly, when many of the developed parts of the world have been fast secularizing, Indians as a whole have fiercely held on to their faiths. This religious seriousness is to be considered a common spiritual asset, not only for Indians, but for the whole of humanity. People who have the future of the human race in their minds wish to strengthen it further. Z. Sardar affirms that the gulf between the radical secularism in some regions of the world and the religiosity in other regions is glaringly great. The emphasis on 'rights' needs a foundation, which in the east is provided by religion. He proposes in these postmodern times a return to tradition, meaning an effort for 'sustaining the values and axioms of a civilization.'[11]

India's heroes have always been people with spiritual depth (Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa), not conquerors, millionaires or sportsmen. Indians admire genuine intellectuals, not mere rationalists. They willingly listen to persons who have had a religious intuition and speak with spiritual unction, and who are not merely sectarian or parochially minded zealots. Many love to read Christian books of some spiritual seriousness: the Bible, the Gospels, the Imitation Christ, Confessions of St. Augustine, the writings St. Teresa of Avila and St. John

[11]Z. Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture*, London: Pluto, 1998

of the Cross. Leaders who are intellectually bent, eager to share knowledge, and are inclined to contemplation, reflection, mysticism and renunciation, always earn the respect of Asians and win a hearing.

Indians have amazingly retained a great Sense of the Sacred. It is a precious value in a rapidly secularizing world to be preserved and fostered. They respect religious persons, gladly take part in religious events, make religious journeys (pilgrimages), keep reciting sacred words. Those words are considered eternal.[12] Indians hold in reverence everything that is symbolic of the divine: sacred places, sacred words, rituals, chants, practices, traditions, objects, teachings, laws, and values. When we play with religious traditions or trivialize sacred symbolisms, we go directly against the religious instincts of the Indians. Indians value silence, renunciation, and a message given with profound conviction. Detachment is considered a sign of genuineness.

19. Models Inspire, Prove Possibility of Imitation

"So you must follow the example of good men and live a righteous life." (*Proverbs* 2:20)

We have referred to several religious texts. They alone may not carry conviction in isolation. They must be put in relationship to human wisdom as understood in different cultures. They must also be counterchecked with the criteria that are widely considered valid in our times. When many approaches combine, the central message about ethical norms goes through and makes an appeal. In this way cooperation in the area of ethical reflection becomes possible, while maintaining at the same time each one his/her own identity. Asians are more open to learn from metaphors than syllogisms, living models than logical arguments, especially in the spiritual field. They look with admiration at inspiring precedents even in different traditions. The figures of persons like Mother Teresa or John Paul II touched the hearts of people much more than apologetics in self-defence or efforts in self-advertisement. They were models of self-giving and egolessness, and exemplified a flaming spirit. Thus they emerged as persuasive agents of social change and common wellbeing.

Pragmatic people think that persons of high moral calibre hold up unrealistic ideals before others and that these ideals do not correspond to the way that the real world works. They believe in what is called *realpolitik*. But men like Dag Hammarskjold, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin

[12]Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, *The Culture of India*, Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, 1982, 299.

Luther King, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, Albert Luthuli, Alexander Solzhenytsin, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Aung San Kyi did not seem to be unrealistic in their approach to the mighty problems they had in hand. They finally achieved what they set out to do, because they brought their idealism to actual human levels. People who believe in dialogue are eager to share the lived experience of such heroic people.

20. Loss of the Sense of Being Human

"*Foundations once destroyed, what can the just do?*" (Psalms 11:3)

We need prophetic persons who have the ability to take in hand the problems that confront us today. For, not only are religions in crisis, but also cultures and civilizations, including the present day's secular civilization itself. The following are some questions that come to our mind in this critical situation. What happens to humanity when, too many of us, having rejected religion as an illusion, have become passive consumers of other types of illusions? What happens when we suffer not only from a loss of religious faith, but even from a sense of being human? What happens when materialism replaces social health, and the home values of cooperation, kindness, and hospitality are not handed on to the next generation?

There was a time when companies and governments used to leave ethics and human refinement to families, teachers, Churches, community and religious leaders. But today nothing like that happens any more. There is less of ethical content in teaching, less of traditional values in the handing on of heritages, and we forget that our duty to love our neighbour includes also our obligation to 'love our children and grandchildren as we love ourselves'. And we forget that this love is expressed not by being concerned about non-renewable resources only, but also about the transmission of the gains of culture and civilization.[13] Modernity has promoted justice not moral values. It is evident that claims for human rights alone do not exhaust the comprehensive requirements of morality.

21. We Need People Who Can Persuade Others of Values

"*Your speech should always be pleasant and interesting,*
and you should know how to give the right answer to everyone."
(Colossians 4:6)

In a culture dominated by 'market totalitarianism,' citizens are selling off their personal dignity for a small pay-raise and disposing off their most valued cultural heritage for trivialities which they think add to their

[13]Schweiker, *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, 515.

comfort. People are blinded by the brilliant performance of some financial wizard, to whom gradually everything becomes legitimate. It gives the impression that there is no law beyond economic success, which has emerged as the 'supreme good' amidst human goals and final law among moral principles.

But we do not despair: "Made up of history and experience, memory and expectation, cultures have their resiliency..."[14] Anthropologists tell us that cultural traditions play a greater role in our life than even beliefs. It is interesting to note that Japan and China are taking enormous pains to ensure civilizational continuity while modernizing themselves. India may have a few lessons to learn. It is in this area of reverence for one's civilization and cultural promotion that believers in dialogue can make a significant contribution. They can join hands together for preserving what is best in their own respective cultural heritages. In so doing, they are in fact assisting to rescue some of the central values common to humanity. The world is looking for persons invested with moral authority and social commitment to help, those who know how to persuade others to do what is right. What they ask is simple: accept what is true and good.

22. Christ Is the Archetype

> "*And the secret is that Christ is in you...*
> *With all possible wisdom we warn and teach them in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature individual in union with Christ.*
> *To get this done I toil and struggle, using the mighty strength which Christ supplies and which is at work in me.*" (Col 1:27-29)

Yudhishtira, the hero of the Indian epic 'Mahabharata', says: "it is not reason alone that points to upright behaviour (*dharma*) nor holy sayings; *dharma* rather is hidden in a cave,"[15] the cave of one's heart. Deep religiosity that one cultivates in one's heart generates principles and values that enrich the ethos of a people. It speaks directly to the conscience and mind of a community, calls for moral transformation, encourages the practice of virtues, as members of a loving human family.[16]

In reality, however, the right ethical choice each time proves to be a difficult challenge. Even with the best of good will a constant struggle goes on between the outer man (tendency to evil) and the inner man (tendency to virtue). This struggle is reflected in the 'Bhagavadgita'

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[14]Dalla Costa, *The Ethical Imperative*, 220.
[15]Dalla Costa, *The Ethical Imperative*, xliii.
[16]Benedict XVI, *World Day of Peace*, 1.1.2011, n.9.

dialogue. It is the main theme of Gurucharan Das's *The Difficulty of Being Good.* The discussion about this inner struggle is central to many traditions. Apostle Paul describes it in his letter to the Romans:

> For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do... My inner being delights in the law of God. But I see a different law at work in my body – a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Rom 7:18-25).

For Christians, the answer therefore is Christ. In this mighty struggle for being good, Christ provides the inspiration and strength required. He is full of grace and truth (John 1:14). In him human dignity achieves plenitude. He remains a unique archetype, a life-giving spirit. He brings God and humankind together (1 Timothy 2:5). United to him they become participators in divine life. It is on this faith that Christianity is founded.

Surrendering to Christ does not stand on the way to progress, freedom or an optimistic view of human possibilities; in fact, it furthers them. For, human intelligence attains its utmost potential, not when it splits the atom or explores the distant skies, but when it discerns what is good and what is evil, when it makes a correct ethical choice with the help of Christ. It is in this that the human person becomes most like unto God. The image of the Father that is in him reveals itself. It is precisely then that the human being becomes fully human, capable of showing a path to the future to his fellow-beings. Pope Benedict XVI says: "The love of God is revealed in responsibility for others."[17]

[17]Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 28.

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HUNHU (*UBUNTU*) AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN AFRICA

Irene Muzvidziwa and Victor N. Muzvidziwa♦

1. Introduction

Ubuntu lies at the heart of the African way of life and impacts on every aspect of people's well being. Broodryk[1] observed that Ubuntu is present in all languages of Africa. For instance *Hunhu* a Shona description in the Zimbabwean context, is known as Ubuntu in Zulu; Botho in Sesotho: Ajobi in Yoruba: Numunhu in Shangaan; Vhuthu in Venda; Bunhu in Tsonga; Umntu in Xhosa; Utu in Swahili and Abantu in Ugandan. This paper seeks to explore the notion of being human by grounding discussions around the concept of what is generally referred to as ubuntu in South Africa and *hunhu* among the Shona in Zimbabwe. The issue of discipline in schools is selected as a way to demonstrate the concept of *hunhu/ubuntu* mostly amongst students. *Ubuntu* can be regarded as the soul force that drives almost every facet of societal life in African societies. In this paper the concept of *ubuntu* and *hunhu* have the same meaning and are used interchangeably. The paper seeks to understand how *hunhu* impacts on discipline in Zimbabwean schools. While *hunhu* in the Zimbabwean context is seen as that act of being human, Nussbaum observed that '*ubuntu* is a capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring.'[2] Nussbaum further notes that *ubuntu* expresses 'our interconnectedness, our common humanity and the responsibility to each other that deeply flows from our deeply felt connection.'[3]

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[1]Broodryk, J., "*Ubuntu:* African Life Coping Skills: Theory and Practice," Paper delivered at the CCEAM Conference held at Lefkosia Nicosia, Cyprus from 12-17 October 2006.

[2]Nussbaum, B., "African Culture and *Ubuntu*: Reflections of a South African in America," *Perspectives* 17, 1 (2003), 2.

[3]Nussbaum, "African Culture and *Ubuntu*," 2.

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Adjibolosoo noted that 'one of the greatest desires of every human being is to live in a society where people respect human dignity, liberty, justice, fairness, equity, and other aspects of human rights.'[4] There is a general trend for African people to demonstrate a strong desire and a tendency to live a life governed by *ubuntu* principles. Thus for many authors particularly those of African origin like Tambulasi and Kanyuni,[5] *ubuntu* is seen as the foundation of African people's cultural and communal life. In addition, it is seen as something that works and reinforces the nature of a person's being human. *Ubuntu*, action-oriented as it is, celebrates the people's lived experiences and their potential.

This paper examines the consequences of *ubuntu* when applied to the school context especially in areas of school discipline. A high performing school is likely to be characterised by the presence of *ubuntu* in its midst. Generally the level of school discipline reflects the presence and/or absence of *ubuntu*. The underlying argument is that when schools embrace *ubuntu* we witness a disciplined student body. Consequently, the type of leadership that leads to improved school performance is related to the presence or absence of *ubuntu*. An ill-disciplined student body, on the other hand, shows the failure to embrace the principles of *ubuntu*. Hence, the absence of *ubuntu* would result in undesirable outcomes in schools.

This paper is organised into four major sections excluding the introduction and conclusion. The first section defines key concepts such as *ubuntu* (*hunhu*) and the human factor. The second section discusses *hunhu* in its relation to school culture and school discipline. The third section examines the link between ill-discipline in the form of the absence of *hunhu* to what is termed human factor decay. The fourth section preceding the conclusion examines the relationship between *hunhu* and school leadership. Lastly the paper draws a conclusion and presents concluding remarks in the light of the discussion of *ubuntu/hunhu*.

2. Defining *Ubuntu/Hunhu* and the Human Factor

Ubuntu is a Xhosa phrase which means Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu i.e. a person is perceived as a person through one's relationship to others. *Ubuntu* 'describes a traditional philosophy that is based on the values of

[4]Adjibolosoo, S., "The Human Factor in Nation Building," *Journal of the Human Factor* 5, 1 & 2 (1999), 1.

[5]Tambulasi, R. and Kayuni, H. "Can African Feet Divorce Western Shoes? The Case of 'Ubuntu' and Democratic Good Governance in Malawi," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 14, 2 (2005), 147.

humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values.'[6] While in Zimbabwe *ubuntu* is generally referred to as *hunhu*, *ubuntu* is recognized as the African philosophy of humanism, linking the individual to the collective through 'brotherhood' or 'sisterhood'. Many definitions of *ubuntu/hunhu* exist, however, only a few selected ones are referred to in this article. *Ubuntu* makes a fundamental contribution to indigenous 'ways of knowing and being' and is 'based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community in the spirit of the family.'[7] It is also defined as

> The principle of caring for each other's well being ... and a spirit of mutual support... Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through [a] recognition of the individual's humanity. *Ubuntu* means that the people are people through other people: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. It also acknowledged both the rights and responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and social well-being.[8]

Mutwa observed that *ubuntu* 'is simply a way of living and being that allows our basic goodness to come forth.'[9] True *ubuntu* recognises differences and hence always strives to strike consensus rather than impose a universal sameness on issues. This is why for instance in schools, leadership plays an important role in creating an environment that conducive to both teaching and learning.

True *Ubuntu* takes plurality seriously. While it constitutes personhood through other persons, it appreciates the fact that 'other persons' are so called, precisely because we can ultimately never quite 'stand in their shoes' or completely 'see through their eyes'. When the ubuntuist reads 'solidarity' and 'consensus' s/he therefore also reads 'alterity', 'autonomy', and 'co-operation (note: not 'co-optation').[10]

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[6]Broodryk, J., "*Ubuntu:* African Life Coping Skills: Theory and Practice," 2.

[7]Broodryk, J., *Ubuntu: Life Lessons from Africa*, Tshwane: School of Philosophy, 2002, 56.

[8]Republic of South Africa Government Gazette *Government Welfare Paper on Welfare No. 16943*, Pretoria: South Africa, 1996 February, 18.

[9]Mutwa, D., cited in Mulaudzi, F. M. Libster, M. M. and Phiri, S., "Suggestions for creating a welcoming Nursing Community: *Ubuntu*, Cultural Diplomacy and Mentoring," *International Journal of Human Caring* 13, 2 (2009), 47.

[10]Louw, D. J., *Ubuntu and the Challenge of Multiculturalism in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Utrecht: Zuidam and Uithof, 2002, 11.

Ubuntu can be seen as 'the art of interfacing, or finding meaning within the space of interfacing.'[11] It can provide a guide on how to see and organize the world and institutions around us as well as how individuals should behave. As indicated above, *Ubuntu* has core defining values such as 'caring, compassion, unity, tolerance, respect, closeness, generosity, genuineness, empathy, hospitality, conscience, conformity, sharing, and communitarianism.'[12] *Ubuntu* values can play a critical role in terms of effective and efficient management of teaching and learning in schools. For Mbigi there are five key social values known as the collective finger theory that underpin *ubuntu* philosophy: survival, solidarity, compassion, respect and dignity.[13] They collectively have a bearing on educational outcomes. When put into practice, respect for one another within the school context generates trust among students, teachers and parents. Indiscipline tends to be less where pupils respect their teachers and parents. Sigger, Polak and Pennink[14] expanded on the meaning of the collective finger theory values, suggesting that the dimension of collective survival lies at the heart of *ubuntu*. Thus, in terms of discipline in schools, brotherhood and togetherness underpin *ubuntu* as it is the pupils' behaviour towards their peers and adults that shows dignity or lack of it. It is indisputable that *ubuntu* puts emphasis on how an individual contributes to the good of the collective.

Among the Shona in Zimbabwe there is the saying that, *kuwanda huuya museve wakapotera pamuzukuru* which means there is an advantage in being many, since at times a friend or a relative can come to your rescue. Therefore 'values of together-ness and brotherhood ... can be seen as part of a way of living, with a particular dimension of survival.'[15] The emphasis on survival as dependent on group solidarity is also seen in the

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[11]Cilliers, J., "In Search of Meaning Between *Ubuntu* and *Into*: Perspectives on Preaching in Post-Apartheid South Africa," Paper presented at the 8th International Conference of *Societas Homiletica* held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 19-25 July 2008, 4.

[12]Mulaudzi, F. M., Libster, M. M. and Phiri, S., "Suggestions for creating a welcoming Nursing Community: *Ubuntu*, Cultural Diplomacy and Mentoring," *International Journal of Human Caring*, 13, 2 (2009), 47.

[13]Mbigi, L., *Ubuntu: The African Dream in Management*, Randburg: Knowledge Resources, 1997.

[14]Sigger, D. S. Polak, B. M. and Pennink, B. J. W. *'Ubuntu' or 'Humanness' as a Management Concept: Based on Empirical Results from Tanzania*, CDS Research Report No. 29, University of Groningen, 2010.

[15]Sigger, Polak and Pennik, *'Ubuntu' or 'Humanness' as a Management Concept*, 12.

saying *kuwanda huuya varume kutswa kwendebvu vanodzimurana* (it is a blessing to be many when disaster strikes men can help one another).

Ubuntu is linked to the second dimension that of solidarity which is highly celebrated in communal life. Solidarity is a principle that empowers and fosters team spirit. The Shona idiom that *chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda* (one finger cannot kill lice) denotes that it is impossible to single-handedly accomplish one's vision or societal goals; hence the emphasis should be on team work. In trying to make sense of the above idioms, and looking at the school with the problems such as truancy, absenteeism and bullying, the need for collective efforts which involve parents, teachers and the senior management team to combat the discipline problems reveals itself. Once this collective effort is achieved, surely improvement is likely to happen.

The third dimension of the collective finger theory is compassion which 'can be compared with the value of love. Through compassion team members develop a shared vision... This personal understanding and caring will eventually lead to the feeling of belonging to the whole.'[16] Shona greetings do illustrate the issue of the interconnectedness of an individual to the community. In the morning in Shona one would say:

Manganani, marara sei? (Good morning, did you sleep well?)[17]
ndarara, kana mararawo (I slept well, if you slept well.)
After lunch time:
Maswera sei? (How has your day been like?)
Ndaswera, kana maswerawo. (My day has been good, if your day has been good.)

There is an emphasis through the above greetings on mutual harmony and well being of every person. Compassion reflects a communitarian spirit which takes into account the value of collectivism, solidarity, love, honest appreciation and concern of the other person's well being even in simple acts as a greeting. Such concern and recognition of every human being as a person extends to both kin and strangers. This is the essence of *ubuntu.* According to Nussbaum, *ubuntu* 'addresses our interconnectedness, our

[16]Sigger, Polak and Pennik, *'Ubuntu' or 'Humanness' as a Management Concept*, 13-14.

[17]Nussbaum, B., "African Culture and *Ubuntu* Reflections of a South African in America," *World Business Academy* 17, 1 (2003), 4.

common humanity, and responsibility to each other that flows from our connection.'[18] For Nussbaum

> the intangible aspect of *ubuntu* is simply the movement and feeling of compassion for our fellow human beings in our hearts and the spontaneous desire to act in a caring and compassionate way, in which our selfhood is inspired by a sense of collective belonging.[19]

The dimensions of respect and dignity though treated as separate values are deeply connected among the Shona as is the case elsewhere in Africa. Respect and dignity are key building blocks of *hunhu*. Elders as well as all other members of a society are to be respected if a person is to be accorded as having *hunhu*. With *hunhu* there is a deliberate attempt to ensure that 'the diversity of vision is encouraged and protected. All voices are respected and heard.'[20] Every person is important; hence the need to respect and protect the dignity of all persons. This ability to accord others dignity and respect is self reflective in the quality of humility and is also demanded on oneself as a leader and follower. A wise counsel for Shona leaders is summarised in the saying: *Gudo guru peta muswe vadoko vagokuombera*; meaning, in order to earn respect, a hero should humble himself/herself by demonstrating humility to the juniors. This is an exhortation amongst Shona leaders to humble themselves before their followers. Humility was considered a virtue amongst the many good and effective traditional leaders in Africa.

3. The Human Factor

Adjibolosoo the founder of what is now termed the Human Factor (HF) approach to development, with particular reference to Africa, noted that 'one of the greatest desires of every human being is to live in a society where people respect dignity, liberty, justice, fairness, equity, and other human rights factors.'[21] He defined the HF as

> The spectrum of personality characteristics and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function and remain functional over time. Such

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[18]Nussbaum, B., "*Ubuntu:* Reflections of a South African on our Common Humanity," *Reflections* 4, 4 (2003), 21.

[19]Nussbaum, "African Culture and *Ubuntu* Reflections of a South African in America," 9.

[20]Nussbaum, "*Ubuntu:* Reflections of a South African on our Common Humanity," 15.

[21]Adjibolosoo, S., "The Human Factor in Nation Building," *Review of Human Factor Studies* 5, 1 & 2 (2000), 1.

> dimensions sustain the workings and application of the rule of law, political harmony, a disciplined labour force, just legal systems, respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life, social welfare and so on.[22]

The HF is closely related to the notion of *ubuntu/hunhu*. Adjibolosoo noted that the HF includes 'unique characteristics and qualities of human personality'[23] that contribute to successful accomplishment of goals. The HF relates to practical application of knowledge to solve everyday problems. Some of the positive HF characteristics linked to organisational success include a sense of responsibility, forward looking behaviour, dedication to duty, commitment, resourcefulness, resilience, tolerance, inventiveness, entrepreneurial spirit, innovativeness, imagination, vision, accountability, integrity, diligence and discipline. People who score lowly in any of the above unique characteristics will find it hard to achieve organisational goals and to have *hunhu*.

For Adjibolosoo 'a properly developed HF animates guides and encourages people to perform.'[24] Adjibolosoo identified six components constituting the HF as the spiritual capital, moral capital, aesthetic capital, human capital, human abilities and human potentials.[25]

The Spiritual Capital refers to the aspect of the human personality that is usually in tune with the universal laws and principles of human life. It equips the individual to see beyond what the five senses are able to grasp and also furnishes him or her with deeper insights into the non-material world.

The Moral Capital represents habits and attitudes of the human heart that are based on universal principles regarding right or wrong. It refers to the qualities individuals possess that lead them to conform or not conform to universal principles of life. Its constituents include integrity, humility, justice, charity, patience, honesty, sensitivity, fairness, etc.

The Aesthetic Capital includes a strong passion for music, art, drama, dance and other artistic capacities (imagination and creativity are strong components) with a deep sense of love for beauty.

The Human Capital refers to the knowhow and acquired skills (i.e., technical, conceptual, intellectual, analytic and communication skills),

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[22]Adjibolosoo, "The Human Factor in Nation Building," 2.

[23]Adjibolosoo, S., *The Human Factor in Developing Africa,* London: Praeger, 1995, 33.

[24]Adjibolosoo, *The Human Factor in Developing Africa*, 34.

[25]Adjibolosoo, *The Human Factor in Developing Africa*, 36-37.

human experiences, knowledge, intelligence, physical well-being, emotional health, etc.

The Human Abilities constitute the power or capacity of an individual to competently undertake projects or effectively perform tasks requiring mental and physical effort. They are required for the effective use of human capital. Examples include wisdom, vision, commitment, determination, diligence, courage, accountability, judgment, responsibility, competence, motivation, human energy, optimism, endurance, self-control, objectivity, reliability, and so on.

The Human Potentials are the human talents that may or may not be harnessed and employed for human utilization. These may be referred to as the yet undeveloped and unused dimensions of the HF.

It is a combination of these components that will ensure a dynamic, healthy organisation including effective schools. With differing emphasis and (re)contextualization *hunhu/ubuntu* and the HF can be considered as a spiritual way of being that have a strong influence on school communities. The two concepts are also an expression of daily living. This is what makes us human. *Hunhu* and the HF are keys to understanding issues of discipline in schools.

4. *Hunhu*, School Culture and School Discipline

In this section we first begin by noting 15 key personality values that are critical to *ubuntu* and have a bearing on educational attainment and teaching and learning.[26] A brief definition of school culture and school discipline is proffered. This is done with reference to the Zimbabwean case. The 15 *ubuntu* personality values are as follows:

- togetherness (*humwe*)
- brotherhood (*husahwira*)
- equality (*kuenzana*)
- sharing (*kugovana*)
- sympathy (*tine hurombo*)
- empathy (*kunzvirana*)
- compassion (*moyo muchena*)
- respect (*kutyora muzura*)
- tolerance (*kuzvibata*)
- humanness (*unhu*)
- harmony (*runyararo*)
- redistribution (*kugovana*)

[26]Broodryk, J. "Ubuntu: African Life Coping Skills: Theory and Practice," 26.

- obedience (*kuteerera*)
- happiness (*mufaro*)
- wisdom (*njere*).

School outcomes are influenced by these *ubuntu* personality values. Where pupils have more of the above qualities there is greater desire to learn. However, every school has its own unique culture. Organisational culture gives an organisation such as a school its unique identity. Culture represents an organisation's way of life and the way things are done. Many studies have revealed a link between organisational culture and school effectiveness, school development, academic achievement and learner discipline. Organisational school culture influences how people do things.

African culture embraces every aspect of life; both the material and non material aspects of life. It includes aspects such as norms, values, beliefs, laws, behaviour expectations, technological competences, strategies for survival and all that has to do with being human. It is also important to bear in mind that culture is dynamic, diverse and ever changing. This has a bearing on people's *ubuntu*. Culture can be regarded as the 'total life-ways,' and 'characteristic of the members of a society including knowledge, and patterned way of thinking and acting, that are learned and shared.'[27] According to Schein, organisational culture can be viewed as a pattern of shared basic assumptions – invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think and feel.[28]

According to Janson and Xaba, 'there is a strong correlation between a positive organisational [school] culture and academic quality or school effectiveness.'[29] A supportive school environment is conducive to teaching and learning. The changing school environment in many Zimbabwean schools in the last decade had a detrimental effect on student discipline. It has been noted that 'effective discipline contributes to a school's effectiveness and involves keeping good order, consistently enforcing fair,

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[27]Sanderson, *Macrosociology: An Introduction to Human Societies*, New York: Happer and Row, 1988, 31.

[28]Schein, E. H., *Organisational Culture and Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985, 58.

[29]Janson, C. A. and Xaba, M. I., "The Organisational Culture of the School," in van der Westhuizen, P. C., *et al* eds., *Schools as Oganisations*, Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 2007, 139.

clear and well-understood rules and the infrequent use of punishment.'[30] Discipline sets the limits to what is acceptable behaviour in a given organisational setting such as a school.

School discipline has two major functions one 'is to ensure the safety of staff and students' and secondly 'to create an environment conducive to learning.'[31] Acts of indiscipline by students and staff defeat the aims and purpose of education. It has been noted that school discipline has preventive, supportive and corrective dimensions.[32] Ikoya observes that 'preventive discipline involves the application of preventive measures to halt the occurrence of misbehaviour,' while the supportive approach to discipline 'makes provisions for the student to be constantly aware that he is effectively monitored by the school authority who will not accept any form of misbehaviour' and the third dimension 'involves the use of corrective measures to keep the students way from misbehaviour.'[33] Maphosa and Mammen note that 'discipline in the classroom is a pre-requisite if any meaningful learning is to take place ... no meaningful learning can take place in a chaotic environment.'[34] This point is supported by Janson and Xaba who stress that 'learner discipline is an essential aspect of the school's organisational culture as well as a function of it.'[35]

5. *Hunhu* and Human Factor Decay

Moral intentional agency in human persons is critical to people's humanness. Moral responsibility underpins people's behaviour as self-directing goal seekers. It has been observed 'that the absence of truth, integrity, responsibility, accountability, trust, and commitment leads to serious social, economic, and political problems'[36] that can have strong influences on educational outcomes. To a greater extent an environment

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[30]Janson, and Xaba, "The Organisational Culture of the School," 137.

[31]Ikoya, P. O., "Gender Difference in the Application of Preventive Discipline Practices among Principals of Secondary Schools in Nigeria," *Journal of Social Science* 2009, 50.

[32]Ikoya, "Gender Difference," 50.

[33]Ikoya, "Gender Difference," 50.

[34]Maphosa, C. and Mammen, K. J., "How Chaotic and Unmanageable Classrooms have Become: Insights into Prevalent Forms of Learner Indiscipline in South African Schools," *Anthropologist*, 13, 3 (2011), 185.

[35] Janson, and Xaba, "The Organisational Culture of the School," 142.

[36]Adjibolosoo, S., "Pillars of Economic Growth and Sustained Human-centred Development," in Muzvidziwa, V. N. and Gundani, P. eds., *Management and the Human Factor: Lessons for Africa*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 2003, 8.

that does not focus on moral character, appropriate work ethics and mutual respect for fellow human beings is bound to lead to human factor decay, i.e., moral degeneracy. According to Adjibolosoo this 'degeneration of human qualities and/or characteristics – decline in physical, spiritual and ethical systems and mental and moral qualities – ... paved the way for the creation of deeply rooted problems.'[37] Once HF decay sets in, it becomes extremely hard for any attempt to correct the situation. The causes of HF decay are both external and internal to individuals and organisations. External forces that impact on people's lives include the absence of social, cultural and political support. The long-term negative effects of colonial domination and destruction of local cultures is also part of the external forces impacting negatively on people leading to HF decay. The media, religious teachings and an inappropriate educational system dominated by foreign values are part of the powerful forces preventing or slowing down the development of positive HF characteristics in people.

The lack of trust between the various constituent parts, exposure to violence and a lack of striving for meaningful societal goals can also lead to decline in HF development and ultimately HF decay. This decline in human qualities has been very noticeable in many schools in Zimbabwean and other African countries such as South Africa. Internal conditions giving rise to the decline or human factor decay lead to the growth of a culture of violence, lack of respect, intolerance and a culture of anti-school behaviour. Hooliganism increases in some schools. Some of the schools experience the very opposite of what contribute to positive HF development. Moral degeneracy, backbiting, dishonesty, laziness, indiscipline, hot headedness, disruptive behaviour, lack of positive characteristics such as responsibility, compassion, courage, perseverance and wisdom, characterise persons lacking the positive HF qualities. It has been observed that 'lack of accountability and responsibility are the kingpins of HF decay.'[38] For instance in schools an over emphasis on individual achievements and a western oriented curriculum that cherishes western values also leads to HF decay. There is a need to arrest HF decay in African schools as this is likely to spread to the rest o society. HF decay is something that eats into the fabric of any society. In the realm of

[37]Adjibolosoo, *The Human Factor in Developing Africa*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995, 58.

[38]Ofori-Amoah, B., "Human Factor Perspective and Development Education," in Chivaura V. G. and Mararike, C. G., eds., The *Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1998, 41.

education it undermines effective teaching and learning. In an article on Servant Leadership Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa[39] noted how three women principals organised to tackle indiscipline and set their schools on the road to educational success.

It has been observed that 'in South Africa, for example, there are reports of a sharp increase in the number of cases of learner indiscipline in schools and there are cases where learners are alleged to have murdered other learners on school premises.'[40] Schools have become unsafe environments that are not conducive to learning and teaching. Some of the commonly cited examples of indiscipline include the use of drugs, gangsterism, shootings, sexual battery, rape, vandalism, hooliganism, violence, substance abuse, theft, pornography, etc. Maphosa and Mammen in their survey of fifteen schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa divide forms of indiscipline into two category, minor and major forms of indiscipline. Fifteen minor forms of indiscipline noted in the study are noisemaking, non submission of work for marking, leaving learning materials at home, talking without the teacher's permission, teasing other learners, absenteeism, swearing at other learners, minor lies/dishonesty, non completion of given assignments, unsanctioned movement within the class, late coming, unsanctioned movements out of class, violating school dress code, back chatting teachers, use of vulgar language and forcibly taking fellow learners belongings.[41] Another seventeen major forms of indiscipline in schools are identified in the study cited above. The major forms of indiscipline are noted as follows: truancy, bullying, threatening other learners, theft, verbal attacks on fellow learners, assaults on fellow learners, graffiti on classroom/toilet walls, vandalising school property, verbal attacks in teachers, substance abuse, sexual harassment, indecent assaults on female learners, bringing dangerous weapons into the schools, viewing of pornographic materials, threatening teachers, assaults on teachers and burning school property.[42]

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[39]Muzvidziwa, I. and Muzvidziwa, V. N., Women and the Concept of Servant Leadership: Biblical Influences," *Journal of Dharma* 36, 4 (2011).

[40]Maphosa and Mammen, "How Chaotic and Unmanageable Classrooms Have Become," 185-186.

[41]Maphosa and Mammen, "How Chaotic and Unmanageable Classrooms Have Become," 189.

[42]Maphosa and Mammen, "How Chaotic and Unmanageable Classrooms Have Become," 190.

What is happening in some schools is a reflection of the transition from *hunhu* (humanness) to *Into* (a thing). Cilliers observed that 'South Africa is going through such a movement from *Ubuntu* into *Into*, in which people often treat one another not as human beings but as things.' [43] There is a prevalence of crime, violence, hooliganism and indiscipline in schools. This situation is not only found in South Africa but other countries in Africa including Zimbabwe. When a person is perceived to be losing *hunhu* among the Shona such a person is referred to as *hapana munhu* (there is no person). It means one has become an *Into*, a thing. It is therefore imperative that schools produce pupils with *hunhu* instead of HF decay (*hapana munhu*).There is the realisation that many school pupils lack *hunhu* and it is part of the role of education to instil *hunhu* in pupils if education is to be worthwhile.

It is quite clear that the lack of a positive HF in any organisation is characterised by the internal fissions and external pressures which seem to contribute to institutional instability and social vices. Partly HF decay in organisations such as schools is due to ignorance, apathy, dishonesty, lack of accountability and responsibility. The development of a positive HF also requires transformational leadership; leadership that is committed to change and cherishes and possesses the necessary HF attributes.

6. *Hunhu* and School Leadership

There is a strong synergy between *hunhu* and educational leadership. Our discussion of the concepts of *ubuntu/hunhu* and the HF leads us to the conclusion that successful schools need to embrace *ubuntu* leadership. The HF series Zimbabwe Chapter has placed leadership at the centre of successful development including educational transformational strategies. In Shona there is the saying that *hove kana yavakuora inotanga musoro* (when a fish starts to rot it starts with the head). This places leadership at the centre as far as educational outcomes are concerned particularly when schools want to improve. There are many Shona proverbs and idioms that offer wise counsel to those in leadership or aspiring to leadership positions. For instance the saying that *mwana washe muranda kumwe* means a chief's son is an ordinary person outside his kingdom. In the case of schools and their communities, this concept should be applied in such a way that it bridges the gap of perceiving the school and the community as

[43]Cilliers, J., "In Search of Meaning Between *Ubuntu* and *Into:* Perspectives on Preaching on Post-Apartheid South Africa," Paper presented at the 8th International Conference of *Societas Homiletica* held in Copenhagen, Denmark from 19-25 July 2008.

different such that there is no partnership. Both parents and pupils should take ownership of the school responsibilities and the school staff needs to be accommodative of the community. *Ubuntu* is about humility and followership in the spirit of servant leadership. Teachers and school principals would benefit in their capacities as school leaders by embracing the *ubuntu* ideals of servant leadership. Similarly the previously mentioned saying that *gudo guru peta muswe vaduku vagokutya* (in order to earn respect, a hero should humble himself/herself by demonstrating humility to the juniors) applies to and tends to give meaning to leaders who respect their colleagues and followers. There is a lot to be gained by school leaders through a grounding of the curriculum and leadership principles in *ubuntu.* Leadership that practice *ubuntu* in the school context, like everywhere in society, is respectful of its community partnership. School leaders are facilitators. This is underlined by sayings that warn people against the dangers of pig headedness like *ndambakuudzwa wakaonekwa nembonje pahuma* (talks of the dangers of ignoring advice as this often leads to disastrous outcomes). The idiom highlights the importance of sharing and accommodating other people's views. It is always imperative for one to listen to wise counsel by others. No individual person can single-handedly know it all. Shona proverbs and idioms are a very rich source of wisdom for school leaders and their partners. It is therefore useful to ground school leadership approaches in *ubuntu* philosophy as a guide to effective and successful educational leadership.

Four more Shona proverbs/idioms are presented below in order to expand on the critical role *ubuntu* can play on school leadership. For instance the saying *zano pangwa uinerako* means wise counsel is effective if you also have your ideas. This implies that a school leader is a student of leadership forever. A school leader needs to have a vision and sense of purpose. You need to give as well as take counsel from others. Everybody needs to be part of the process contributing to the transformation process in schools.

The saying *kuziva mbuya huudzwa* (you come to know certain things through learning/training) encourages leaders to be open-minded and to be prepared to learn. This encourages leaders to mentor their followers. Nobody is born a knower. There is also wise counsel in the saying *chisichako masimba mashoma* (without a sense of ownership there is very little commitment). This is a call to leaders to involve others in decision making so that they may be willing to participate in school programme as well as developing a sense of commitment to the programmes being

implemented. The centrality of school community partnership is implied in the above saying. These idioms demonstrate the importance of grounding school leadership principles and practices in *ubuntu*. The true value of *ubuntu* is realised when those in leadership stop paying lip service to *ubuntu* philosophy. School principals are not just administrators; they are there to offer a vision and lead the way in implementing curriculum changes embracing *ubuntu*. Msila observed that 'many township schools in South Africa continue to be underperforming and management structures are usually said to be helpless in the face of educational change.'[44] Partly this situation is due to failure to develop positive HF approaches to leadership as well as embracing of *ubuntu* in school settings.

7. Conclusion

There is a strong sense that prospects for a bright future for many in Africa depends on grounding practices and policy in *hunhu/ubuntu*. The discussions in preceding sections of this article do demonstrate the importance of being human in essence having *hunhu*. *Hunhu/ubuntu* can be used as a spring and sounding board for action and social practices including the field of education. There is a call to make *ubuntu* a rallying point in terms of development of education that empowers students and their communities. However, success is premised on the assumption that in Africa this will depend on the adoption of *ubuntu* and the positive HF approach to human challenges. While the numbers of those who have embraced *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy is small, there is increasing recognition that *ubuntu* can offer an alternative that can be the foundation on which many social practices and programmes including educational ones are anchored. There is a need to make *ubuntu* and the HF resources for transformation and development of sound educational and development programmes leading to positive outcomes. The preceding discussions while not exhaustive offer hope for the future.

Sustainable development depends on harnessing the energy of the majority instead of focusing on the few. The article strongly argues that the focus in teaching, learning and professional development irrespective of field needs to be grounded on notions of *ubuntu/hunhu*. Leadership through *ubuntu* is perceived as some form of collective agency. In the case of education it means adoption of a strong community-school partnership where all stakeholders, i.e., teachers, learners, school leaders, parents, community and local and central government co-participate in shaping and

[44]Msila, V., "*Ubuntu* and School Leadership," *Journal of Education* 44 (2008), 68.

implementing of learning programmes. *Hunhu* opens up possibilities that can lead to the building of leadership that facilitates positive changes in society. The voice of everyone is valued and consensus building can lead to strong communities.

While the numbers of those who have mainstreamed *hunhu/ubuntu* in their programmes might be few, there are cases that demonstrate that *ubuntu* can empower both leaders/followers. *Ubuntu* can give direction in terms of what needs to be done and how things can shape up. With growing awareness of the centrality of *hunhu* and that people matter people will begin to do things for themselves thereby in the processes learn to break away from the chains of dependence. When leaders have embraced *hunhu* they are likely to generate support and sustain school development and professional development. Everybody within a given community or in the case of a school will feel part of the change process and that they are valued and have something to contribute toward realisation of desired educational outcomes.

The consequences of failure to embrace *ubuntu/hunhu* are there for all to see. It is what is referred to as human factor decay. In schools HF decay manifests itself through students' indiscipline. HF decay can be arrested in schools by adopting *ubuntu/hunhu* and developing positive HF attributes amongst the learners, educators and parents. It is our hope that this article adds to the increasing literature on what it means to be human in Africa and also examines practical application of *ubuntu/hunhu* in education.

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PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Shankar B. Chandekar♦

1. Introduction

Today, with the advent of globalization, liberalization and privatization, the world, indeed, has become a Monstrous Super Market. Business Managements are guided by the mechanistic view of life which encourages fierce competition and 'survival of the fittest'. Managerial excellence is mostly centred round the final goal of creating "surplus" and fetching "maximum profit" for the owners who are at the top of the management. There is, however an awakening all over the world about the drawbacks of the Modern Art and Science of Management. A Holistic View of Management is gradually emerging; and a welcome shift in paradigm is on the horizon.

This paper aims at introducing the Holistic Vision of Management enunciated in the *Bhagavad Gita* which is more comprehensive than the 'System View' or the 'Holistic View' of the management presented by the modern management theories and practice. The *Gita* concentrates on 'managing oneself and 'managing the Human Response' by imparting direct vision of Truth. An attempt has been made to bring out this most outstanding contribution of the *Gita* to the Modern Management Science.

Management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, effectively accomplish selected aims. As managers, people carry out the managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling. Managers are entrusted with the responsibility of taking actions that will make it possible for individuals to make their best contribution to group objectives. Management thus applies to small and large organizations, to profit and not-for-profit enterprises, to manufacturing as well as service industries. So, the term "Management" refers to business, government agencies, hospitals, universities, churches, temples, and in its broad sense covers all business and non-business organizations. Effective managing is the concern of the Corporation President, the hospital administrator, the government first line executives and the heads of all institutions and enterprises, big or small.

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2. Present Global Scenario

Today, tremendous strides of modern science and technology greatly dominate and decisively determine the life style, living standard and economy of people all over the world. In the blinding brilliance of globalisation and liberalization, hunger, homelessness, oppression, unemployment, illiteracy, disease, etc. have fallen out of public visibility and conscience. Governments of the world over have begun to pursue global capital as their paramount priority, and have gradually retreated from their primary responsibilities of securing social and economic justice to the weaker and deprived sections of then-people.

Mighty organizations like Multinational Corporations are guided by the mechanistic view of life which encourages fierce competition with mania of 'survival of the fittest'. They are motivated by the restless desire for accumulation of unlimited wealth and power at the cost of horrible exploitation of human and natural resources. These Corporations largely control the legislative process, distort information received by the public through media and determine, to a significant extent, the functioning of our education system and the direction of academic research. Corporate and business leaders are prominent on the board of trustees of academic institutions and foundations, where they inevitably use their influence to perpetuate a value system consistent with corporate interests.

The whole world now seems to be in a process of Westernization. Western competitive and self-assertive model of business management is being followed in almost all fields of life. General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) which was signed by World Trade Organisation (WTO) initiated the liberalization of trade in services. The GATS has classified services into 12 sectors and education is one of them which includes primary, secondary, higher, adult and other education services. So, education has become a big service industry. As a result, universities which were once supposed to be the centres of learning are now allured by the idea of salesmanship for their commercial presence all over the world. In such fierce competitive environment, talented and highly qualified individuals are motivated by an endless thirst for money and elusive social position.

Thus, the illusion of unlimited power nourished by astonishing scientific and technological achievements has produced the concurrent illusion of mistaking wealth and power for peace and happiness. The latter illusion is based on the failure to distinguish between knowledge and wisdom, between achievement and fulfilment in life. If modern

management is partial in thinking that wealth and power is the final goal of life, then it is committing a blunder. Science and technology are not to be blamed for it. It is not the fault of technology, but of its blind use. Not only technology but even religion could be harmful if its purpose is not fully understood. Instances to illustrate this can be recorded in volumes, but Hiroshima, Iraq, Moghul atrocities and Godhra could be readily cited. So, management science should be in a position to impart wisdom and vision to the top level modern managers in the world.

3. Indian Scenario

Unfortunately, the present Indian management theories and practice, by and large, suffer from inherent inadequacies of transplanted system to an alien land. Most of our Management Schools work as factories for producing managers required for the task of creating "surplus" for their masters. In India, probability of managers belonging to an elite minority is higher than the developed countries like U.S.A. Pulin Garg and Indira Parikh during their research on Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad's students found that the sampled respondents had minimal emotional reaction with their own culture. Most of them were products of western literature. During their course of study, they are not even made aware of the goals and commitments laid down in the Constitution of India.

Nowadays, though business ethics is taught in Business Schools, it is taught as a routine matter, and not as a commitment to social, and ecological awareness. Sampal Singh has identified three models of education prevalent in the field of management, viz., Professional's Model, Pragmatist's Model and Humanist's Model. Professional's Model is based on the assumption of the existence of a systematic body of knowledge supporting managerial practice. On the other hand, the exponents of Pragmatist's model, probably equate management with street smartness, and hence over emphasize the importance of interpersonal communication and negotiation skills, working on computers, developing superficial leadership qualities and impressive personality. Humanist's model, however, aims at offering prompt service to their customers. There may be many more models – some extol profit making, some achievement, and some others evaluate performance in terms of a social benefit oriented economy.

4. Towards a Paradigm Shift

All these models now seem to be on the turning point. Recently, management gurus in India have started discovering profound principles of management theory and practice in our ancient literature. It is a matter of

great satisfaction that there is such an awakening. A welcome shift in paradigm is on the horizon.

In the Western world also this paradigm shift from mechanistic view of life to the systems view has been gradually taking place. E. F Schumacher, the author of *Small Is Beautiful* maintains that man's current pursuit of profit and progress which promote giant organization and increased specialization has in fact resulted in gross economic inefficiency, environmental pollution and inhuman working conditions. With the emphasis on 'person' and not on the product, he points the way to the world in which capital serves Man instead of Man remaining a slave to capital. The universal prosperity in the modern sense cannot provide a foundation of peace, because such a prosperity often increases greed and envy, and destroys intelligence, happiness, serenity and thereby the peacefulness of man. A distinguished Scientist Fritjof Capra, in his celebrated books, *The Turning Point* and *The Web of Life*, explains the emergence of 'systems thinking' as a profound revolution in the history of Western scientific thought. In systems approach, the properties of the parts can be understood only from the organization of the whole. Systems view prepares the individual organization, big or small, to visualize its role and evaluate its performance in the context of a larger whole. This paradigm shift will make us redefine our concepts of Efficiency, Productivity and Profit, and transform our modern perspective of Managerial Excellence and Total Quality Management.

5. The Challenging Task

Modern Manager is expected to be more creative and innovative. But his creativity depends on the stimulus of reward in cash or kind. It is more or less a 'conditioned response' promoted by Stimulus Response (SR) bond. Several corporates are now willing to create an atmosphere where creativity and innovation is encouraged. The official term for it is entrepreneurship. Conceptually, it means a situation where in a company uses the talents and dynamic abilities of its manager to develop innovative in-house project services. Such conditioned response has its limitations too. Though it helps creating 'surplus' for himself and for his company, it hardly makes any substantial contribution in the larger context of social equity and justice. Practically, all progress artistic, scientific, moral or spiritual is the contribution of individuals who did not work for "rewards". So, Human Response (HR) management for the well-being of "ALL" i.e. for the individual and the universe has been the most important and

challenging task before the art and science of management past and present. The *Bhagvad Gita* invites us to prepare ourselves for this challenging task.

Secondly, the crisis of our time is a crisis of character. Today we come across instances where highly qualified managers, executives, bureaucrats working on the most important positions are involved in corruption, misuse of their power and authority. Some are reluctant to perform their legitimate duty as a public servant on account of tremendous political pressures or threats from the underworld. This is the real challenge that threatens the art and science of management today. It is at this critical juncture that the *Bhagavad Gita* comes to our rescue by presenting the holistic vision of life and action for the enlightenment of an individual who is at the centre of all human endeavours.

6. The *Bhagvad Gita* as Art and Science of Management

The *Bhagvad Gita* is a world classic, comprised of chapters 25 to 42 from the *Bhishma Parvan* of the Mahabharata, renumbered 1 to 18. It is a divine dialogue between the enlightened teacher and the most earnest truth seeker that succeeded in handling the most critical situation in life and action. Vyasa excels in his poetic strategy while presenting Krishna's universal message of managerial excellence with utmost clarity and simplicity. It is a unique poem interwoven with profound philosophy and practical wisdom, and with a passionate longing for the direct vision of Truth. Arjuna represents a lionhearted manager suddenly caught in the crisis of delusion and dejection. Krishna stands firm as the infallible guide (*sarthi*), who with the scintillating strokes of his 'Yoga of wisdom in action' scattered the clouds of Arjuna's dejection and prepared him for the task of fighting against the evil forces for the welfare of all beings.

The *Bhagvad Gita* emphasizes the importance of managing oneself whereas most of the modern management theories and practices deal with the problems of managing the raw materials, manpower, finances, infrastructure and other external factors. The *Gita* clearly points out the strategic role which managing oneself plays in the well being of the individual and the society. The ultimate goal of human endeavour according to the *Gita* is *sarvabhutahitherata*: 'welfare of all beings,' and that is to be achieved through selfless action. This goal is more sublime, much superior than the Western ideal of 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' which is to be achieved through altruistic action. The value system in the *Gita* emerges from realization of the Self whereas the value

system in the modem management theories arises from the tendency of self-glorification and self-assertion.

The poetic strategy adopted by Vyasa is noteworthy. The dialogue opens with the question of Dhritarastra, the blind king who was greatly responsible for the injustice done to the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra persisted in attitude and actions that led to disaster because he had a seriously impoverished concept of his identity, his self, equating it with material possessions. The self can turn selfish, covet and appropriate the wealth, even the bare subsistence of others. Dhritarashtra represents this type of evil and unrighteous thought processes. The word Dhritarashtra uses for 'my people' is *mamkah* also means people who are obsessively preoccupied with a narrow sense of 'I' and 'mine', and are utterly self-centred and selfish. The word also implies those thought processes which imbibe the sense of vanity, ego and attachment.

But this does not exhaust Vyasa's subtlety, for although Arjuna in his sudden flood of compassion would seem to us to be at the opposite pole from being a *mamakah* type Vyasa wants us, as Krishna to Arjuna, to probe his mood deeper to understand the complex ontological and psychological realities deep-hidden in this crisis. First of all, was it Arjuna's genuine selflessness (expansion of the self) that was behind his decision of withdrawal from the battle? On a much earlier occasion when all negotiations had failed and war was found to be inevitable, Arjuna accepted to fight against the evil forces. If he did not feel compassion then, if even on the battlefield just a few minute before the arrows started flying he arrogantly wanted to see the veterans whom he would vanquish, can this flood of emotion that unexpectedly overwhelmed him be regarded as genuine compassion? All the psychosomatic symptoms mentioned with precision in the following *sloka*:

> When I see all my kinsmen who have come here on this battlefield,
> my heart aches, life-force withers from my limbs.
> Tongue dries within and my mouth is parched;
> My whole body quivers and my hair shudders in horror.
> The great bow Gandiva slips from my hand, and my skin burns within;
> I am no longer able to stand firm because my mind is whirling.
>
> (*Gita* 1.28-30)[1]

[1]दृष्टवेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ।
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥

This shows that it was a traumatic shock, a failure of morale when he saw Bhishma and Drona intent to fight whom he loved and adored most. This is the most critical situation where managerial skill and excellence of almost all great managers fail.

This Arjuna's crisis of dejection shows that Arjuna too was not completely free from the human weakness of *mamakah*: i.e., 'I' and 'Mine'. Yet he wants to justify his withdrawal from the war against evil by putting forth lame excuses supported by traditional ethics of the orthodox preachers and priests. The verses from 31 to 45 in the first chapter show that overpowered by bookish and hearsay learning of the *Shruti* Arjuna was altogether lost in confusion about his *Svadharma* or *Svakarma* – his duty as a Kshatriya. Vyasa's mature poetic wisdom depicts this confused state of mind in the most appropriate words as *klaibya* (unmanliness) *kshudram hrudayadvarbalyam* (petty faintheartedness), *prajnavad* (ignorance of the learned), *mohakalila* (turbidity of delusion), and *srutivipratipanna bhudhi* (understanding bewildered by scholastic learning of scriptures. But one of the most positive and outstanding characteristics of the heroic Arjuna is that he is aware of his ignorance and weakness. Moreover he is humble and curious enough to receive the light of wisdom and vision from the enlightened seer like Krishna. Arjuna prays:

> With my very being tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness
> And my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I am asking you;
> Tell me that which is decidedly good; I am your disciple.
> Pray, instruct me, who have put myself into your hands. (B.G. 2.7)[2]

Such purity of heart is the essential characteristic of a great manager. Without such magnanimity and piety the individual will try to deceive

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गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥
dṛṣṭavēmaṁ svajanaṁ kṛṣṇa yuyutsuṁ samupasthitam |
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati |
vēpathuśca śarīrē mē rōmaharṣaśca jāyatē ||
gāṇḍīvaṁ straṁsatē hastāttvakcaiva paridahyatē |
na ca śaknōmyavasthātuṁ bhramatīva ca mē manaḥ ||

[2]कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहंशाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥
kārpaṇyadōṣōpahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasammūḍhacētāḥ |
yacchreyaḥ syānniścitaṁ brūhi tanmē śiṣyastēऽhaṁśādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam ||

others, and even himself by scriptural rationalizations, claiming noble motivations for acts indulged in from inferior impulses.

7. The *Gita*'s Basic Principle of Management: Know Thyself

For overcoming these human frailties and inferior impulses the *Gita* emphasizes the need for realization of Self through direct vision of Truth. The *Gita* wants us to transcend the ego-centric little individual self and expand it to the higher consciousness of the Eternal Self; and ultimately identify ourselves with the Supreme Self, that is, *Purushottama*. This is what is meant by being *atmavan*, possessing the Real Self, or 'Know Thyself.' No action is a genuine act of the self unless it is performed in the wakefulness of the Supreme consciousness. Such action is called in the Gita as *akarm*, the Selfless action. It is also termed as *svakarm* (one's own action), *svadharm* (one's own duty), *svabhavajakarm* (action according to one's own nature or birth) or *varnakarm* (caste duty). The art and science of merging the ego-centric little individual self (*jivabhava*) into the Universal Self is named as *atmayoga, budhiyoga, svakarmayoga, svakarmayoga, rajavidya, adhyatmavidya* or *purushottama yoga* in the *Gita*.

8. The *Gita*'s Theory of Management: *Purushottama Yoga*

The *Gita* develops and presents a profound theory of this *Purushottama Yoga* in the last five Slokas of Chapter XV. The *Gita* finds the Absolute reality in the vision of the *Purushottama*. He is both *Kshara* and *Akshara*, Mutable and Immutable, and, yet he is other because he is more and greater than either of these opposites. *Purushottama*, The Supereme Self, is capable of being both at once. This *Purushottama* consciousness is the highest peak of enlightenment where the individual perceives himself as the 'Whole Unified Universe'. Whosoever is awakened in this Supreme consciousness is no longer bewildered by the world of *dvandha* (dualities) and *moha* (delusion); and stands firm in the performance of selfless action for the welfare of the world. The technique applied for attainment of this Yoga as mentioned in the XI Chapter is *divyachakshu* which means imparting the direct vision of Truth to the aspirant. The *Gita* calls it *jnanavijnanasamhitam* (wisdom fused with vision).

Krishna unfolds this theory of trinity, i.e., *Kshara*, *Akshara* and *Purushottama* by revealing all the aspects of life and existence: empirical, rational and spiritual as follows:

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space, Mind, Reason and Ego:

thus divided eightfold is my Nature.
But this eightfold Nature is empirical.
These eight components are mutable, dynamic;
they are always in circular motion;
always changing, interchanging and interweaving with one another.
They are interlocked to form the organic unity like a tree.
The harmony of these eight components is recognized as *Samyavastha* or (Kshara).
This is the changing aspect of the Reality (Universe) wherein goes on the play of whole creation.
This is our lower Nature, *Apara Prakriti* or *Maya* which is visible to all, but recognized by the enlightened one.' (*Gita* 7, 4-6.)[3]

Within this visible *Kshara* permeates the immutable *Akshara* which can be experienced as 'Beingness, Radiance and Bliss (*sat*, *cit*, *ananda*) with the Eye of Wisdom (*jnanachakshu*).This is our Superior Nature, the Immortal Self, the Pure Consciousness of our Being which constitutes life and which sustains the visible universe. The *Purushottama* indicates the Supreme Self – the whole unified universe where the relativity of *Apara* and *Para*, *Kshara* and *Akshara*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, *Jada* and *Chaitanya*, *Sat* and *Asat* totally disappears. *Kshara* and *Akshara*, changing and the changeless inseparably co-exist in *Purushottama*. This is our Real (Supreme) Self recognized by the name *visva* (universe). This unified vision of the Ultimate Reality is called by the *Gita* as 'Yoga'. When the enlightened individual performs all his actions in *Purushottama* Consciousness it is Gita's *Karamayoga*.

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[3]भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेवच ।
अंहकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥
अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाभावो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥
एतद्योनीनि भुतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥
bhūmirāpōऽnalō vāyuḥ kham manō buddhirēvaca |
aṁhakāra itīyaṁ mē bhinnā prakṛtiraṣṭadhā ||
aparēyamitastvanyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi mē parām |
jīvabhūtāṁ mahābhāvō yayēdaṁ dhāryatē jagat ||
ētadyōnīni bhutāni sarvāṇītyupadhāraya |
ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayastathā || (*Gita* 7, 4-6)

This Supreme Yoga is defined in the aphoristic style as harmony between the individual and the universe (*samatvam yoga uchyate*); Performing *Svakarma* (selfless action) in unison with this *Atma Yoga* is excellence in action. It is divine wisdom in action. This unified vision of Yoga is the central concept of the *Gita* around which all empirical, rational, and spiritual perceptions of life and action are skilfully interwoven. This vision of *Purushottama Yoga* goes far beyond the 'systems view' or the 'holistic view' of the universe presented by modern scientists. It is even deeper than the 'deep ecological view' advocated by environmentalists. It is indeed, more sublime than the cult-oriented mysticism of the spiritualists. This *Samatva Yoga* is often mistaken for Patanjali's Yoga System. It has also been misinterpreted by the traditional Vedantins as *Jnanyoga* limited to subjective knowledge *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brhaman) or *Ayamatma Brahman* (This Self is Brahman). It is beyond all these sectarian views. It unfolds all aspects of the universe and set them in harmony. It awakens in us our Universal Form: *Viswarupa*, i.e., *Sarvam khalu idam Brahman* (All here is Brhaman).

8. Threefold Value System

The Supreme consciousness, I am the whole unified universe, (*ahameva idam sarvam, vasudevah sarvamiti*) is the main source of all human values. It inspires us with death defying courage and vitality, magnanimity and piety, sensitiveness and intelligence which are the basic constituents of human character. It reveals that Action, Wisdom and Devotion (*karma, jnan ani bhakti*) constitute a threefold unity which emancipates man from corruption of thought and action. It educates man how to be in harmony with himself and his environment. It creates the ability to reflect on the critical, social, economical, political, religious, spiritual and educational issues facing humanity and to find out practical solutions. It does not underestimate science and technology; nor does it over-glorify spiritualism (mysticism), but maintains a balance between the two. It is here that science and mysticism meet to commit for development of human resources. This wisdom and vision when properly understood, digested and transformed into action can really help us to provide effective and efficient management, creative and innovative managers and enlightened leadership, which is the need of the day.

The principles of management which we find scattered throughout the eighteen chapters of the *Gita* are centred round this Yoga of wisdom in

action. Some of the well-known principles related to managerial functions and excellence are elaborated here.

9. Management by Objectives (MBO)

Modern Management practitioners do not make clear distinction between the terms goals and objectives. According to the *Gita*, the goal, i.e., the final destination of all human endeavour, is *sarvabhuthahiteratha*, welfare of all beings. This final goal should never be overlooked while setting varied objectives for the various programmes and activities undertaken by managements. *Gita*'s principle of *yoga karmasu kausalam* is often misquoted and misinterpreted as 'excellence in action,' or 'a skilful completion of a given task.' But the *Gita* wants us to give a serious thought to the consequences or results brought about by successful completion of a particular task.

For instance, on 11 September, 2001 when highly talented but flawed human guided missiles were manoeuvred on an almost impossible trajectory at unimaginable speeds, they accurately pierced the pre-determined floors of the World Trade Centre in New York with the precision of a Rolex chronometer. The heat and explosions melted the sturdy steel and reduced human bone and bodies to mountains of ash! And thereafter with the strategy adopted in retaliation of the terrorist attack the U.S.A. may have lost more than it has gained! No doubt both the parties were at their best in executing their managerial skill and excellence. This cannot be considered as an instance of *yoga karmasu kausalam*; for, the *Gita* ideal means planning, organizing, leading, controlling, executing, and performing all activities and programmes in conformity with wisdom and vision of *Purushottoma* consciousness. It stands for devotion (*bhakti*), i.e., quality assurance. The action flowing from desire and the consequences of the action on the world and the reflexive consequences on themselves are to be in considered in this holistic vision.

The paradox of modern management is that it allows Bill Gates to be the richest man in the world; and at the same time it compels a poor Indian farmer to commit suicide for want of mere subsistence, or on account of his debt. The Principle of *sarvabhuthahiteratha* alone can help us to bridge the ever-widening gap between the haves and haves not. According to the *Gita* every work is to be performed in a spirit of sacrifice which aims at welfare of all beings; in a spirit of worship of the Universal Lord – *Vishwarupa*. They are the great thieves who do not help turning this cosmic wheel of Sacrifice. This concept of Sacrifice is explained in the *Gita*.

10. Factors Responsible for Success and Control of Overall Performance

Some management experts boast that nothing is impossible and success always is within their control. They say 'nothing succeeds like success,' and become over-ambitious, overconfident and triumphalistic and ultimately ruin themselves. The *Gita*'s approach is realistic. The *Gita* invites our attention to all those factors which are collectively responsible for the accomplishment of all actions:

> The seat of action (*adhishthand*), the doer (*Kartd*), the instruments (*Karanam*) of various sorts,
> the several different operations (*cheshta*), and the fifth, providence (*daivam*).[4]

Whatever action, right or wrong, a man undertakes to do with his body, speech and mind; success or failure of that undertaking depends upon these five factors. The seat of action is the frame of body, life and mind which is the base or standing ground for the self, the doer, or the agent. The instruments are primarily the motor organs, the sense organs and all other external instruments essential for the task. *Cheshta* are the various patterns of co-ordinated operation for the realization of objectives. *Daivam* is a complex term with subtle related shades of meaning. Basically it specifies the overall texture of Nature which is interwoven with cause-effect relationship. Secondly *Daivam* means the vast action of the Cosmic Order (*khsara gati*) which is beyond the control of human beings, even with the greatest foresight in planning his action. This factor should not be ignored while evaluating one's performance. It is not fate, fortune or luck factor of the popular belief which intends to nullify the role of the person as agent. The agent enjoys full freedom for attaining *Purusharthas*: *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. The *Gita* encourages the individual (agent) to manage and integrate himself first.

> By one's self should one rise oneself, and not allow oneself to fall; for the self alone is the friend of the self, and self alone is the self's enemy.[5]

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[4]अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ (*Gita* 18, 14)
adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham |
vividhāśca pṛthakcēṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam ||

[5]अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ (*Gita* 18, 14)
adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham|
vividhāśca pṛthakcēṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam ||

Again and again, the *Gita* motivates man for performing selfless action.

For action alone have you authority; none concerning its fruits.
Let not the desire for the fruits of action be your motivation.
Nor should you desire to abstain from action.
Act in unison with wisdom and vision of the Atma-Yoga without attachment, unswayed by success or failure.
This equanimity of mind and intellect is Yoga.[6]
Therefore perform ever the action which needs to be done, without attachment.
For by performing *Svakarma* in passionless restraint one attains the Supreme State.[7]

11. Planning with Vision

Planning is the basic process by which we decide our goals and objectives, and the ways and means to achieve them. Planning involves what is to be done, when it is to be done, where it is to be done, how it is to be done and who is to do it. Hence it is the beginning of the process of management. It identifies the purpose or mission of the organization, strategies, policies and procedures to be adopted, programmes and activities to be undertaken for fulfilment of the mission. Along with information and knowledge planning requires wisdom and vision. The moving force behind every master plan and strategy is vision.

In any management planning cannot be done in isolation. Every management is the inseparable part of bigger organizations that is society, nation, world, natural environment and ultimately of the universe. So the *Gita* advises us to make our short-term and long term planning in harmony

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[6]कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफल हेतुर्भुर्मा ते सङ्गीस्त्वकर्मणि ॥
योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गंत्यक्तवा धनंजय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ (*Gita* 2, 47-48)
karmaṇyēvādhikārastē mā phalēṣu kadācana |
mā karmaphala hēturbhurmā tē saṅgīstvakarmaṇi ||
yōgasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁtyaktavā dhanamjaya |
siddhyasiddhyōḥ samō bhūtvā samatvaṁ yōga ucyatē ||

[7]तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पुरुषः ॥ (*Gita* 3, 19)
tasmādasaktaḥ satataṁ kāryam karma samācara |
asaktō hyācarankarma paramāpnōti puruṣaḥ ||

with the divine traits which develop awareness of belonging to the universe. It is holistic planning which should be done in a spirit of sacrifice. The *Gita* advices us not to disregard this vision of Truth.

> Even the learned and most smart manager who is ignorant of the holistic vision, having no certitude, flounders in doubt and darkness and ultimately perishes. For, neither this world nor the world to come, nor happiness is ever for the man who doubts.[8]

12. Organizing

The *Gita* enunciates the concept of *Lokasamgraha* maintaining harmony in the fourfold social order (*caturvarnya*) of the society according to the nature and functions of *Gunas*. This is often mistaken for caste system in India or class system in the developed countries. But it is the integrated vision of the society which visualizes healthy and harmonious development of its four major systems; namely, Education (Teachers community), Defence (Warriors community), Agriculture, Commerce and Industry (Farmers and business community), and Manual Labour (Workers community). Development and prosperity of a nation depend upon their full co-operation and harmony. Unhealthy competition amongst these systems or ailment in any of these systems will paralyze effective functioning of the whole system and ultimately spoil the individual and social health. This is the most sound principle based on the *Gita*'s holistic vision that the 'whole universe is a living organism' (*purusha idm sarvam*)

13. Controlling

The *Gita*'s focus is on the conquest of the self. It does not believe in unnatural severe austerities or restraints for controlling the mind. It believes in sublimating the senses rather than suppressing the senses:

> Whenever the mind unsteady and restless strays away from the *Purushottama* consciousness, let him ever and forever lead it to the sweetness and light of the Self.[9]

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[8]अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ (*Gita* 4, 40)
ajñaścāśraddadhānaśca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati |
nāyaṁ lōkōऽsti na parō na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ ||

[9]यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥
yatō yatō niścarati manaścañcalamasthiram|

> He who withdraws himself from actions, but ponders on the pleasures of the senses in his heart, he is under a delusion. He is called a hypocrite.[10]

Nowadays most managers have to work under circumstances which create physical and mental stress and strains. The *Gita* gives a practical solution for managing such stress and strains in the following mantra:

> To him who is well-balanced in food and recreation; balanced in performing *Svakarma*, balanced in working and sleeping (work and rest) this Yoga gives relief from woeful stress and strains.

14. Vision and Leadership

Visionary leadership is the need of the day that can be developed by acquiring holistic vision of the *Gita*. This holistic vision enables managers to delve deep into human consciousness, to understand, guide, motivate, innovate and inspire their people by practicing the following profound management principles himself, which set forth the eternal value system.

> Whatever the leader (manager) does, others also do the same. Whatever standards he sets forth, the values he embodies are hailed as the model by his subordinates, staff members. So he must ever be vigilant in performance of his duties.[11]

The leader must be impartial. He can develop impartial views by practicing the behavioural patterns laid down for the *Sthitaprajna*, *Yogarudha* and *Gunatita*.

15. Motivation

For motivating and inspiring ourselves and our subordinates the following mantras are very much promising.

> Yield not to impotence, bow not to coward fit;
> This does not befit your manly fortitude;
> Shake off this paltry faint-heartedness, O Parantapa!

---

tatastatō niyamyaitadātmanyēva vaśaṁ nayēt || (*Gita* 6, 26)

[10]कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥

karmēndriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āstē manasā smaran |
indriyārthān-vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyatē || (*Gita* 3, 6)

[11]यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरोजनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

yadyadācarati śrēṣṭhastattadēvētarōjanaḥ |
sa yatpramāṇaṁ kurutē lōkastadanuvartatē || (*Gita* 3, 21)

Arise to perform thy warrior's duty with undaunted spirits.[12]
Even if you may be the most sinful of all sinners;
With your reason bewildered by scriptural learning;
Embark this boat of wisdom divine;
Which shall bear you safe across the ocean of evil.[13]
'Therefore, O great warrior!
Kill this detrimental doubt born of ignorance that lies hidden in your heart
With the sword of wisdom; be steadfast in *Atmayoga*;
And arise perform your task with fearless mind.[14]

16. Conquest of the Self

The example of leadership and motivation propounded in the Gita will ever remain a guiding star for humankind. Arjuna, one of the greatest warriors of his time, was totally confused and dejected just before the commencement of the war and he refused to take any action. He became intellectually and spiritually weak and was overpowered by indecisiveness which arose from the forgetfulness of his Real Self. When Arjuna asked, "What is it that impels man to sin, even against his will, as if compelling him by force?" Krishna replied:

It is Kama – the subtle ego-centric desire, it is *Krodha* (*Kama* itself turns into *Krodha*) born of *Rajoguna*.

It is all-consuming, all polluting. Know it as man's greatest enemy on earth.[15]

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[12]क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥
klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitattvayyupapadyatē |
kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyaṁ tyaktavōttiṣṭha paraṁtapa || (*Gita* 2, 3)

[13]अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥
api cēdasi pāpēbhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ |
sarvaṁ jñānaplavēnaiva vṛjinaṁ saṁtariṣyasi || (*Gita* 4, 36)

[14]तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥
tasmādajñānasambhūtaṁ hṛtsthaṁ jñānāsināṭmanaḥ |
chittvainaṁ saṁśayaṁ yōgamātiṣṭhōttiṣṭha bhārata || (*Gita* 4, 42)

[15]काम एव क्रोध एव रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥
kāma ēva krōdha ēva rajōguṇasamudbhavaḥ |

The senses, mind and reason are said to be *Kama*'s hiding places. Enveloping wisdom by distorting these, it bewilders man. Therefore mastering first the senses, Krishna, the enlightened leader wants us to kill this *Kama*, the destroyer of wisdom and vision. So long as a leader or a manager is ego-centred, under the sway of his *Kama* he is not in a position to lead or make proper decision and. According to the *Gita*, it is most essential for a leader to understand the nature and functions of *Kama*:

The senses control the body;
but the senses themselves are controlled by the mind;
greater than mind is the reason;
but greater than even reason is he (Kama – the egocentric self)
Thus realizing him to be greater than reason;
And setting him in harmony with the Supreme Self;
By wisdom and vision of Yoga, destroy, O mighty armed;
The enemy in the form of *Kama*, formidable to encounter.[16]

For development of leadership qualities this conquest of the self is the basic requirement.

17. Decision Making

Modern manager faces many dilemmas as Arjuna faced before the commencement of the battle of Mahabharata. The holistic vision of the *Gita* develops an ability to analyze as well as synthesize all aspects of a particular situation to arrive at a particular decision. The man of steadfast wisdom can hardly commit blunders. That is why the *Gita* gives full freedom to a leader and a manager for decision-making.

I have imparted you the direct vision of Truth which is more secret than hidden mysteries.
Ponder it in the silence of your heart, and then in freedom do thy will.[17]

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mahāśanō mahāpāpmā viddhyēnamiha vairiṇam || (*Gita* 3, 37)

[16]इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥
एवं बुध्देः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥
indriyāṇi parāṇyāhurindriyēbhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ |
manasastu parā buddhiryō buddhēḥ paratastu saḥ ||
ēvaṁ budhdēḥ paraṁ buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā |
jahi śatruṁ mahābāhō kāmarūpaṁ durāsadam || (*Gita* 3, 42-43)

[17]इति मे ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।

Here the *Gita* excels in its approach to all prevalent principles of modern management.

18. Conclusion

The *Gita*'s holistic vision of the *Purushottama Yoga* ushers in the dawn of a new Management Era which will ensure (a) economic and social justice to all people in the world, (b) healthy social and political order in the individual nations and in the world, and (c) ecological harmony and a sense of belonging to the universe. If this vision is introduced in our Management Schools, we can produce enlightened managers and leaders. One generation of enlightened managers and leaders can transform this world by bringing into it a generation of fearless and selfless individuals having noble character.

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥
iti mē jñānamākhyātaṁ guhyādguhyataraṁ mayā |
vimṛśyaitadaśēṣēṇa yathēcchasi tathā kuru || (*Gita* 18, 63)

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DIGNITY OF WOMEN: CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

Rekha M. Chennattu♦

1. Introduction

The Christian understanding of the dignity of women is based on the biblical presentation of women and their rightful place in society as human persons. Not even a quick reading of the Bible can miss the powerful presence of biblical women who played significant leadership roles in Salvation History.

I shall begin the paper[1] with a reflection on the biblical presentation of women, focussing on the creation stories (Gen 1-2) and women's role in Salvation History as God's partners in the Old Testament. I shall then explore the New Testament women in the stories of Jesus as well as the attitude of Saint Paul towards women. These biblical episodes uphold the dignity of women as created in God's image and likeness. I shall go on to examine the teaching of the Church and conclude with the Gender Policy of the Catholic Church, a document issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI).

2. Biblical Understanding of Women: Creation Stories (Genesis 1-2)

In the first creation story in Genesis 1, God is powerful and creates everything by WORD and makes human beings as the culmination of

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[1]This Paper was first presented at the at the Hindu-Christian Meeting on the theme "Enhancing Hindu-Christian Relations and Collaboration for Justice, Peace and Harmony," organized by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Vatican City, held at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India, November 6-9, 2011.

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God's creative work (1:3-31).[2] God creates human beings – male and female – in God's image and likeness (1:27). Human beings (both men and women) therefore share in God's life and creative power; God gives them (both men and women) authority over and responsibility for the entire creation (1:26-28). But in Genesis 2, God first makes Adam (2:7) and then the woman from Adam's rib as he is without a partner (2:18-22).

While the creation story in Genesis 1 is often used to reinforce the equality between men and women, Genesis 2 is used to legitimize the domination of men over women. Many factors in the text lend itself to this misinterpretation. Among them two factors stand out: (1) God creates woman as a "helper fit for him [Adam]" (*ezer kenegdo*) because God finds Adam lonely. So the woman is created for the sake of Adam and therefore subordinate to the man (2:18). (2) God creates woman out of sleeping Adam's rib, therefore she depends on him and has only derivative existence (2:21).

How do we understand the expression "a helper fit for him" *ezer kenegdo* in Genesis 2:18b? The modern translations render expressions like helpmate or companion for *ezer*. David Freedman studied all the occurrences of the term *ezer* in the Old Testament (MT) and came to the conclusion that the noun *ezer* could have come from a Semitic root, either *ezer* (meaning "save" or "rescue") or *gezer* (meaning "be strong" or "be powerful").[3] His study reveals that of the twenty-one occurrences of *ezer* in the MT, thirteen come from the root *gezer* and the remaining eight come from the root *ezer*. In Genesis 2:18b Freedman suggests that the root *gezer* (meaning "power" or "strength") is more fitting than the root *ezer* (meaning "rescuer" or "saviour"). The second prepositional phrase "fit for him" (*kenegdo*) appears only in Genesis 2:18 and 2:20. The Hebrew *kenegdo* literally means "that which is over against, counterpart" or "like opposite him" or "according to what is in front of him," i.e., "corresponding to him" or "equal and adequate to himself" as his counterpart.[4] Freedman therefore translates *ezer kenegdo* in Gen 2:18b as "a power equal to him [Adam]."[5]

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[2]Rekha Chennattu, "Biblical women as Agents of Justice and Peace," in *Word of God: Source of Justice and Peace*, A. Peter Abir, ed., Tindivanam: CBF, 2008, 124-58.

[3]David Freedman, "Woman, A Power Equal to Man: Translation of Woman as a 'Fit Helpmate' for Man Is Questioned," *Biblical Archeology* 9, 1 (1983), 56-58.

[4]*The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, 617. See also the discussions in Claus

This interpretation is further supported by the rib symbol used for the creation of woman (Genesis 2:21). How does one understand rib-symbolism? The rib-symbol communicates a three-fold meaning: "The rib is closest to the heart" and "the rib also protects the heart from rough handling, subsequent injury and possible death."[6] The rib is also found "under the arm" and therefore is protected by the arm.[7] The rib-symbol implies that (1) woman is to be loved and cherished (rib is closest to the heart); (2) the woman in turn protects the man (rib protects heart from possible dangers); (3) the woman is protected by the man (rib is protected by arms). The rib symbol in the literary context of Genesis 2 seems to suggest that men and women are created to love and protect each other ("Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh" [Genesis 2:24]). Westermann thus proposes that "the narrative in Gen 2 reflects a stage in civilization which was aware of the great importance of the role of woman in the existence of humankind."[8]

In sum, the second creation story in Genesis 2, just as the first story in Genesis 1, upholds the dignity of both women and men. Genesis 2 presents human existence as a partnership of man and woman that celebrates mutuality and interdependence. It reflects a relationship characterized by communion and intimacy between the partners. Both men and women are created in God's image and likeness and are persons of equal dignity.

3. Women's Role in Salvation History as God's Partners (OT)

We have different portrayals of women in the Old Testament. These stories of women can be grouped under three categories: (1) Women like Eve (Genesis 2-3), Rebekah (Genesis 22-49), Delilah (Judges 16:4-21) and Jezebel (1 Kings 16-21; 2 Kings 9) are wives of great men, but they are traditionally understood as vehicles of evil and deception. One needs to reread these stories from women's perspectives. (2) Other stories like the

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Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1990, 227; Gordon J Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC 1; Waco: Word Books, 1987, 68.

[5]Freedman, "Woman, A Power Equal to Man," 57.

[6]I owe this suggestion to Cyril Desbruslais; see *Philosophy of Liberation* (unpublished class notes; Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 1987), 59.

[7]Wenham proposes a two-fold meaning for the rib symbol: "rib is very close to the heart" (needs to be cherished) and rib is found "under the arm" (needs to be protected); see *Genesis*, 69.

[8]Claus Westermann, *Genesis*, 232.

daughter of Jephthah (Judges 11) and the concubine (Judges 19) reveal some of the most outrageous and atrocious experiences of violence and female victimisation in biblical history. These stories reflect modern women's struggle for the right to life, and for justice, dignity and wholeness. Our daily newspapers reveal that sexual harassment, rape and murder are the destiny of many women even today. (3) Heroines such as Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1:15-21), Miriam (Exodus 15:20, 21; Numbers 12:1-15; 20:1; 26:59; Deuteronomy 24:9; Micah 6:4), Deborah and Jael (Judges 4-5); Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14-20; 2 Chronicles 34:22-33), Esther and Judith are prophetesses and leaders who used their wisdom and exercised their authority to save people from oppression and establish justice and peace in the land.

The dignity of women is upheld and celebrated in God's choices in the Bible. God chose women to participate actively in God's project for humanity. Here I have chosen three stories of women who became the instruments of God's salvific work of liberation, justice and peace.

3.1. Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1)

The beginning of the story of the deliverance of Israel is marked by brave and prudent acts of courageous women like the midwives (Shiphrah and Puah), Moses' mother, Moses' sister (Miriam), and Pharaoh's daughter. Here I present Shiphrah and Puah.

The narrator tells the readers that the king of Egypt commanded the midwives – Shiphrah and Puah to slaughter all the male babies of Hebrew women (Exodus 1:15). What is striking about their story is that these brave women dare to disobey the royal order in order to save the lives of the babies. It is interesting that when they were questioned by pharaoh, they make a lame excuse: "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them" (Exodus 1:19). The narrator informs the readers that the women dared to disobey the king because they feared God (Exodus 1:17). According to the biblical tradition, to fear God means to walk in God's ways by loving and serving God (Deuteronomy 10:12). It is an attitude of wonder and gratitude in the face of God's infinite goodness and overwhelming love that marks one's way of life. The fear of God refers to the deep respect for and single-minded devotion to the Lord irrespective of whatever happens.[9] Fearing God

[9]Responding to Job's despondent prayer, Eliphaz chastises him saying, "But you are doing away with the fear of God" (Job 15:4).

is moreover one of the characteristics of those who remain faithful to the covenant relationship with God (Deuteronomy 6:2; 10:12; 14:23).

As these women feared God, God in turn blessed them by building up families for them (Exodus 1:21). It seems that God helped Shiphrah and Puah to get away with their disobedience and let the king have no other choice but give up on them as agents of genocide. As a result, the responsibility to exterminate all the male babies of the Israelites goes to all the members of Pharaoh's sovereignty (Exodus 1:22). Although they are commissioned by the king to be agents of the total annihilation of Israelite babies, in reality they become deliverers of many Hebrew babies – they respected human dignity and saved human lives.

3.2. Deborah: A Prophetess, Judge and Mother in Israel (Judges 4-5)

The book of Judges narrates the stories of tribal leaders – heroes and heroines from the period before the settlement of Israel in Palestine as one nation. These stories follow more or less the same pattern: the Israelites abandon God; God hands them over to their enemies; the Israelites repent and cry out to God; God forgives them and sends them a judge to save them; the Judge delivers them from the hands of their enemies; the land rests for some years; the judge will die and then the cycle of sin-punishment-repentance-deliverance repeats itself. Deborah stands out as the only woman among the judges and charismatic leaders of this period; her story is narrated twice: first in prose (Judges 4) and then retold in poetry (Judges 5).[10]

The Israelites were severely oppressed by the Canaanite King Jabin and his commander Sisera for 20 years and it is at this moment of crisis that Deborah takes up the task of delivering Israel as her mission.[11] As a judge, Deborah sits under a palm tree and exercises judgment, settles disputes and dispenses justice to the people. As a prophetess, she is the messenger of God and mediates God's word to the people. She guides Barak to the forefront of war, plans the strategy of the battle, and determines the moment of attack. After this mighty victory, "the land was at rest for 40 years," that is, there was peace in those years as a result of Israel's faithfulness to their covenant with God.

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[10]For a discussion on the discrepancies between the stories presented in the prose version and in the poetic version, see John Gray, ed., "*Joshua, Judges and Ruth*," *The Century Bible*, London: Nelson, 1967, 216-22.

[11]For a survey of the oppression of Israelites by Sisera (1221-1201 BCE), see John Garstang, "*Joshua and Judges*," *The Foundations of History*, London: Constable, 1931, 289-94.

Deborah is portrayed as a multifaceted personality and a competent leader. She speaks on behalf of God, gives counsel, inspires teamwork, brings about liberation from oppression, establishes justice and thus ensures the well being of the people. The effectiveness of her leadership is revealed by the fact that she could bring together people from six tribes, the largest number gathered by any of the 12 judges to fight against their respective enemies. This is particularly significant since, as the narrator indicates, a disordered political system and extreme individualism marked the period. Hence she is bestowed the honour of a "mother in Israel."

3.3. Judith: A Prophetic Leader of Israel (Judith 8-16)

The setting of the mission of Judith is provided in the first seven chapters of the book (Judith 1-7).[12] Holofernes, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, has captured many cities and peoples. On their way to Jerusalem, Holofernes and his army arrive at the fictional town of Bethulia and cut off the water supply of the Israelites. They were left with two choices: either to die without water for their allegiance to Yahweh or to give up their faith and worship the king of the Assyrians.[13] The council of elders decided that they would hold out for five more days in order to see whether God would save them; if not, they preferred to surrender rather than die.

At this crucial moment, Judith appears for the first time in the narrative (Judith 8:1-8). The author gives the details of her genealogy and makes her story deeply rooted in the traditions of Israel (8:1). Judith is depicted as a rich widow (8:4) who observes the covenant laws by fasting and keeping the important feasts (8:6). She is beautiful (8:7) and God-fearing: "No one spoke ill of her, for she feared God with great devotion" (8:8). When Judith learns that the leaders of her community has decided to give up their faith if God does not save them in five days, she rebukes them for their lack of commitment to the covenant relationship with God and reminds them of what God has done for the people of Israel (Judith 8:9-27). Judith understands God's ways; her speech reveals her wisdom

[12]Judith's story is a "historical fiction." When one compares the historical details of the story of the book of Judith with the actual history of Israel, there seem to be many discrepancies; see the detailed study of Irene Nowell, *Women in the Old Testament*, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1997, 153-178.

[13]The author of the book of Judith introduces Nebuchadnezzar as the king of Assyria ("The twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh" [Judith 1:1a]), but in real life he was the abhorrent king of Babylon who exiled the people of Israel.

and prudence. She is on a mission of saving Israel, and she is absolutely certain that God will deliver Israel by her hand (Judith 8:33).

The author dedicates one whole chapter to her prayer before she leaves for the Assyrian camp (Judith 9:1-14). She knows the rituals and the traditions of Israel and wears sackcloth and puts ashes on her forehead. Her prayer follows the usual structure of Israelite lament and prayer of petition.[14] It reveals the depth of her relationship with God, whom she recognizes as the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth, the God of the lowly, the powerless, the hopeless and the oppressed (9:11-12). She prays that God may make her, a widow, God's instrument to defeat the powerful Assyrians. After this long prayer, she goes to the Assyrian camp with her maidservant. Judith's beauty won her acceptance in the camp (Judith 10:19). She then persuades Holofernes to believe that she has deserted her people and joined their enemies (Judith 11) and succeeds in getting him to fall in love with her (Judith 12). Seizing an opportune moment when alone with Holofernes in his tent, she cuts off his head when he is drunk, and returns home with the head of their enemy (Judith 13).[15]

Judith always remains faithful to her God and her religious traditions and practices. The book concludes with her hymn of praise (Judith 16). Like Miriam who celebrated Israel's escape from Egypt with song and dance (Exodus 15:20-21) and Deborah who led the community with a song of praise after killing Sisera (Judges 5:1), Judith sings a hymn of praise to thank God for delivering Israel from the oppressive hands of the Assyrians (Judith 16). Her hymn underscores God's continued protection of Israel.[16] Like Mary in the New Testament, Judith receives the honorary title of "blessed among all the women of the earth" (Judith 13:18). The last sentence of the book ranks Judith among the judges who guided Israel before the monarchy: "No one ever again spread terror among the

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[14]Nowell, *Women in the Old Testament*, 160.

[15]The paradox is that Judith, a widow, has the courage to kill Holofernes, but Achior, the military commander and leader of the Ammonites, faints when he sees the head of Holofernes (Judith 14:6).

[16]Because of the close verbal similarities between Judith's song (Judith 16) and that of Moses (Exodus 15), J. W. van Henten suggests that she is portrayed as a new Moses, the greatest prophet and deliverer of Israel ("Judith as a Female Moses," in F. van Dijk-Hemmes and A. Brenner, eds., *Reflections on Theology and Gender*, Kampen: Pharos, 1994, 33-48). After a comparison between Judith and David, André LaCocque claims that "Judith is David in the feminine;" (*The Feminine Unconventional: Four Subversive Figures in Israel's Tradition*, Minneapolis: Fortress Pres, 1990, 35).

Israelites during the lifetime of Judith, or for a long time after her death" (16:25). Judith's wisdom and brave actions lead the Israelites to peace and prosperity. Like the Judges in general and Deborah in particular, Judith becomes an agent of God's mighty work in saving Israel from her enemies.[17]

4. Women in the Stories of Jesus

The presentation of women in the gospels is revolutionary in the context of the socio-religious traditions concerning women in the Second Temple period of Judaism.[18] Elizabeth Achtemeier describes the situation of women in this period as follows:

> Women were excluded from testifying in a court trial; they were not to be seen in public or to speak with strangers, and outside their homes they were to be doubly veiled. They could not even teach or be taught the Torah in their homes... They had become second-class Jews, excluded from the worship and teaching of God, with status scarcely that of slaves.[19]

We have different portrayals of women in the life and ministry of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus, as well as Gentile women were included in the genealogy of Jesus [Tamar (Aramean, Genesis 38), Rahab (Canannite, Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25), Ruth (Moabite, Ruth 1-4) and Bathsheba (Hittite, 2 Samuel 11-12)] (Matthew 1:2-16). Women were present in the ministry of Jesus (e.g., Mary, the mother of Jesus [Luke 1-2; John 2; 19], Mary and Martha [Luke 10/John 11-12], Mary Magdalene [John 20], the Canaanite woman [Matthew 15/Mark 7] and the Samaritan woman [John 4]). Women were there at the tomb of Jesus (Mark 16:1 [Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, Salome]; Matthew 28:1 [Mary Magdalene and the other Mary]; Luke 24:10 [Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary mother of James]; John 20:1[Mary Magdalene]). Women were the

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[17]"'So perish all your enemies, O LORD! But may your friends be like the sun as it rises in its might.' And the land had rest forty years" (Judges 5:31). See also Judges 3:11, 30; 8:28.

[18]See also Rekha Chennattu, "Revisualizing Women in the Story of Jesus," *Word and Worship* 41, 4 (2008), 270-80.

[19]Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Women: An Overview" in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (eds., B. M. Metzger and M. D. Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 807.

first to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-11; John 20:18).[20]

This short survey highlights the significant role played by women at every stage in the life of Jesus, from conception to resurrection. The gospels thus demonstrate the decisive role played by women in the progressive unfolding of Salvation History. Here I have chosen three outstanding women from the Gospels.

4.1. Mary, the Mother of Jesus (Luke 1)

Mary is traditionally depicted as a sinless virgin who is elected to be the mother of God, a model of humility and selfless devotion to God. A second model regards Mary as a paradigm of our universal quest for justice, equality and wholeness. I shall focus on the presentation of Mary in Luke 1.

Mary is presented as the one who is filled with the power of God: the angel promises that the Holy Spirit will come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. Mary however addresses herself as "the servant of the Lord." The reference is not a portrayal of Mary's naïve submissiveness and humility; on the contrary, the servant of God is an honourable title attributed to the great figures in the history of salvation – Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and the prophets. Like them, Mary is filled with God's power and her life should be seen within the context of God's redemptive work accomplished through these servants of God.

Mary's *Magnificat* stands in the grand tradition initiated by the victory songs of Moses, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, David and Judith. It reveals a God who intervenes to reverse the established order by scattering the proud, overthrowing the powerful and sending away the rich empty handed. Mary's song highlights the grander dimensions of God's universal salvific plan transcending the boundaries of time, space and class – God's mercy is for all who fear God (Luke 1:50); God reaches out to the poor, the lowly and the destitute (Luke 1:52-53). Mary as the representative of the new Israel, the new people of God, thus becomes an agent of God's work of liberation, justice and fullness of life for all and forever.

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[20]Women's stories in the Gospels also include women in the parables of Jesus (e.g., Luke 15; 18; Matthew 13; 25), the gospel texts dealing with women's issues or gender justice (e.g., the question on divorce in Mark 10:10-12). But it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with all of them.

4.2. The Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15)

The Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28 is the mother of a daughter possessed by a demon who will be the beneficiary of Jesus' healing ministry.[21] The story, however, gives no attention to the healing itself; instead it focuses on the dialogue between Jesus and the woman. The same story is narrated in the Gospel of Mark (7:24-30), but Matthew seems to have altered the Markan story.[22] Matthew gives special significance to the woman and her interventions. By the specific reference to the place as Tyre and Sidon (Gentile territories) and the designation of the woman as Canaanite (indigenous people of Canaan and ancient enemies of Israel), Matthew presents the woman as a political enemy of, and a religious outsider for, the Jews.[23] She encounters Jesus in a public place – the domain of men.[24] In Matthew's version, the woman is presented as a social critic who transcends the traditional norms and conventions concerning the role of women in public, which appreciated the surrender and submissiveness of this woman pleading for the "fallen crumbs." The true image that emerges from the text is that of a bold and courageous woman who takes the initiative to come out on her own and make her request to Jesus by shouting: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David" (Matthew 15:22). Her request reflects the Christological titles of the early Christian communities ("Lord, Son of David") and the language of the Jewish prayer – the language of the lamentation psalms ("Have mercy on me").[25] A lament psalm is understood as an act of hope and trust in God's

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[21]Normally a woman is depicted as a "daughter of a man" or "sister of a man" or "wife of a man" or "mother of a son."

[22]The understanding is that Mark's Gospel is earlier than Matthew's.

[23]For the importance of these cities during the OT and NT periods, see LaMoine F. De Vries, *Cities of the Biblical World*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006, 73-82.

[24]The first century culture of the Mediterranean society relegated the activities of women to the private or domestic sphere; see Karen Jo Torjesen, "Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History," in *Searching the Scriptures*, vol 1: *A Feminist Introduction*, ed., Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; New York: Crossroad, 1993, 290-310. See also Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982.

[25]See for example, "Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us" (LXX Psalm 123:3a).

faithfulness to the covenant promises.[26] Her persistent request (*ekrazen*) coupled with her liturgical posture of kneeling (*prosekynei*) underlines her desperate need as well as her confident faith in Jesus' divine power (as the expected Davidic Messiah) to heal her daughter (Matthew 15:25). The woman thus seems to have transcended the boundaries of her own religious traditions, customs and beliefs.

Matthew portrays the woman as an active dialogue partner who dares to confront Jesus, the newly found Jewish prophet, with counter theological arguments. Jesus' categorical statements: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24) and "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (Matthew 15:26) are very rude and harsh. They contradict the usual charm, respect and compassion of Jesus. What is striking is the fact that in spite of Jesus' harsh words, she does not give up but challenges Jesus with equally powerful counter arguments: "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." The implication of her response – "the dogs eat from the fallen crumbs" – is that "Gentiles as well as Jews are fed by God."[27] Although she accepts the priority of the Jews in Salvation History, she challenges Jesus to include Gentiles as an integral part of the salvific community brought about by Jesus. She wins in this theological dispute concerning the boundaries of Jesus' mission and gets her daughter healed. She seems "to have opened the way for Jesus' (and the Church's) mission beyond the Jewish community."[28] The divine power of Jesus is for all – Jews and Gentiles, men and women – and that all should be the beneficiaries of justice, peace and equality – the blessings of God's reign.

The woman's gender and non-Jewishness render her intervention with Jesus insignificant and marginal in the Jewish world of that time. In the Gospel of Matthew, however, she is praised for her "great faith" required of all true disciples of Jesus. ("O woman, great is your faith" [15:28b]). What does this great faith refer to? It consists in her ability to interpret her faith in response to the needs of the emerging situation or

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[26]For a study of Matthew 15:21-28 and the Lament Psalm, see Gail O'Day, "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman," in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed., Amy-Jill Levine; Sheffield: Academic Press, 2001, 114-125.

[27]Daniel Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, *Sacra Pagina* 1, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991, 235.

[28]Sharon Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed., Letty M. Russell, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985, 65-72.

new context. She is reading the "signs of the times" by bringing non-Jews into the family of God's chosen people. Like the prophets in the Old Testament, the woman seems to be filled with the Spirit and the power of God to speak on behalf of God, and to reveal the will of God for her daughter's destiny.

4.3. The Samaritan Woman (John 4)

I shall now examine the Samaritan story in John 4.[29] In this missionary episode the evangelist makes a woman the protagonist; this is also one of the few texts in the Gospels, in which the issue of women is explicitly raised by the characters and responded to by Jesus (John 4:9, 27). The Samaritan woman is presented as a social critic, a contextualized theologian and a committed apostle.

The Johannine Jesus allows the Samaritan woman to question him at every significant moment of the narrative. The request of Jesus in 4:7b: "give me a drink" is questioned by the woman in 4:9: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" Her response establishes a two-fold division; she challenges the religious association between the Jews and the Samaritans as well as the social association between men and women.[30] She has the ability to give water to Jesus, but she raises an objection because of the social and religious prohibitions. The woman introduces the issues of the national antagonism between the Jews and the Samaritans, and of the interaction between men and women in public. Like Jesus, she has also shown an openness which transcends social traditions by entering into a dialogue with him. Her courage and freedom are great as she is completely unaware of the identity of Jesus.

Although the Samaritan woman is traditionally interpreted as a prostitute who was evangelised by Jesus, the dialogue between Jesus and the woman in 4:19-20 reveals that her sins are not the point of the story. It is in verses 19-20 that the woman takes an initiative in bringing forward a new topic and Jesus' prophetic character by raising the issue of the right place of worship. If her personal life were the central theme of the story, then, like the

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[29]Rekha Chennattu, "Women in the Mission of the Church: An Interpretation of John 4," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 65, 2001, 760-773; reprinted in French, "Les femmes dans la mission de l'Église: interpretation de *Jean* 4." *Bulletin de Litterature Ecclesiastique* CVIII/3, 2007, 381-396.

[30]Birger Olsson claims that the symmetrical use of participial construction in the Greek text in reference to Jesus on the one hand and the woman on the other hand emphasizes this separation; see *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2, 1-11 and John 4, 1-42*, Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1974, 177.

disciples of John the Baptist, very probably she would have asked a personal question: "What then shall I do?" (see Luke 3:10-14). On the contrary, what she brings forward is a national and religious issue pertinent to her people, namely, the right place of worship. According to the Scripture of the Samaritans, the Pentateuch, there is only one place of worship (Deuteronomy 12:2-12); Mount Gerizim is the Mount of grace and blessing, because Noah and Abraham offered sacrifice there.[31] This disagreement about the right place of worship was the most important religious dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Samaritans believed that the Messiah would settle this dispute (John 4:25). In the words of Teresa Okure, "the woman thus proves to be remarkably in touch with the current disputes between the two nations. As for finding a topic worthy of a Jewish prophet she could do no better than raise this long standing issue of Gerizim versus Jerusalem."[32] These verses thus reveal a woman well-versed in her religious tradition and a theologian who dares to confront a prophet and discuss theological issues with him; and she does both these in the context of her own religious tradition. She is rooted in her tradition yet open to learn from Jesus, the newly found prophet. She is portrayed as someone who initiates and encourages dialogue and contextualization in our mission.

The woman's change from unbelief to belief in Jesus reflects the faith-journey of a committed believer. At the beginning she encounters Jesus with puzzlement because of her ignorance. She is however open to participate more and more actively as the dialogue progresses. Her response when she recognizes Jesus as the Messiah is very significant. She abandons the water jar and goes into the city to spread the good news of her encounter with Jesus, the Messiah.[33] The transforming effect of her apostleship is marked by the whole-hearted response of the people from Sychar.

At the beginning of the story there existed no dealings between the Jews and the Samaritans (4:9), but at the end of the episode, they become members of the one covenant community (4:42). This episode thus projects a breaking down of all barriers – gender, religious and racial – that will bring about a radical egalitarian understanding of the presence of the Church in the world.

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[31]John MacDonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans*, London: SCM, 1964, 406.

[32]Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42*. WUNT 2/31, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988, 115.

[33]This resembles the standard way of responding to the call of discipleship in the synoptic Gospels: leaving the boats in Mark 1:16-20 and leaving the tax stall in Matthew 9:9.

5. Paul's Attitude towards Women

Although the letters of Paul *seem to have presented* the differing views of Paul on the role of women in the church, no one can deny Paul's vision of a new society characterized by reciprocal partnership between men and women in the church. There are passages that impose some restrictions on the participation of women in the life of the church (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11). As I have argued elsewhere, these texts need to be understood as pastoral directives aimed at specific situations and concrete problems for the building up of the church.[34] One needs to be careful in distinguishing the voice of the apostle from the concerns of the early churches (e.g., 1 Corinthians 7 and 14). There are also other passages which underscore the oneness and mutuality of women and men in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-28). Moreover, on various occasions, Paul acknowledged the roles actually played by women colleagues and apostles and the significant contributions made by them in the church (Romans 16). Therefore, one needs to make a distinction between the general principles of Paul and their pastoral applications in response to the specific concerns of different communities.

As Paul expected the imminence of the Parousia, it is understandable that, in his missionary work, Paul did not focus on the transformation of society in general (e.g., Philemon 16-18; see also the references to the institution of slavery within the church in 1 Corinthians 7:20-24) and the establishment of gender equality in particular. However, Paul's colleagues and co-workers like Lydia, Phoebe, Prisca, and Junia are testimonies of women's active participation in the ministry of the gospel in the early Christian communities. It is therefore difficult to deny Paul's vision of a new society brought into being by the power of God's grace which transforms the old inequalities and discriminations (1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Galatians 3:26-28). It seems that it is the deutero-Pauline letters (e.g., 1 Timothy 5:3-16; Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18) and the writings of the apostolic fathers (e.g., 1 Clemens 1.3; 21.6-7) which forced women out of leadership role and compelled them to be submissive in conformity with their position in the patriarchal household systems.[35] Unfortunately it is this tradition that was handed down by the church for centuries until the reawakening of women in the 18th century. Now the time has come to

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[34]Rekha Chennattu, "Partnership of Equals: Paul's Vision of Women in the Church," in *The Relevance of Saint Paul: An Indian Reading of His Letters*, Kurien Kunnumpuram and Rekha Chennattu, eds., Mumbai: St Paul's, 2009, 274-290.

[35]See also Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Virgins, Widows, and Wives: The Women of 1 Corinthians 7," 148-168.

recapture the vision of the apostle Paul and reclaim the rightful place of women in the church and in society.

In sum, the cumulative weight of the evidences found in the authentic letters suggests that (i) Paul was ahead of his time in promoting a dynamic and reciprocal partnership between women and men, and in appreciating and approving women's leadership roles in the church; (ii) Women did play important leadership roles in the life and mission of the churches founded by Paul. These women apostles indeed reveal the universality of God's blessings. However, the actualization of Paul's vision of a new society characterized by gender equality and dynamic partnership between women and men still remains a task of the church in the unfolding history of salvation.

6. The Dignity and Mission of Women in the Church

The teaching of the Church respects the dignity of women and call for women's active participation in almost all spheres. The members of the Second Vatican Council emphasized the dignity of women and their unique role in society: "It is fitting that they [women] are able to assume their proper role in accordance with their own nature. It will belong to all to acknowledge and favor the proper and necessary participation of women in the cultural life."[36] Pope John XXIII articulates the concern of the Church for women as follows: "Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role or allowing themselves to be regarded as a kind of instrument, they are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons."[37]

The Apostolic Letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, underlines the ample evidence that we have in the history of the Church of the presence of women in the Church as "true disciples, witnesses to Christ in the family and in society, as well as in total consecration to the service of God and of the Gospel."[38] It also underlines the absolute necessity and importance of the active participation of women in the life and the mission of the Church by citing the Declaration *Inter Insigniores*, "the Church desires that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their role is of capital importance both for the renewal and humanization of society and for the rediscovery by believers of the true

[36] *Gaudium et Spes*, 60.
[37] *Pacem in Terris*, 41.
[38] *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 3.

face of the Church."[39] As the Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem,* concludes:

> The Church gives thanks *for all the manifestations of the feminine "genius"* which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; she gives thanks for all the charisms which the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the People of God, for all the victories which she owes to their faith, hope and charity: she gives thanks for all *the fruits of feminine holiness.*[40]

The dignity of women as equal partners with men was further emphasized by Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) in his Letter concerning the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Reply regarding a *dubium* concerning *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, "In any case it cannot be forgotten that the Church teaches, as an absolutely fundamental truth of Christian anthropology, the equal personal dignity of men and women, and the necessity of overcoming and doing away with 'every type of discrimination regarding fundamental rights' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 29)."[41] In the same letter, the Cardinal further assured that "the Word of God, in proclaiming the essential value and eternal destiny of every person, reveals the ultimate foundation of the dignity of every human being, of every woman and of every man."[42]

7. The Gender Policy Document for the Church in India

The Gender Policy document prepared and promulgated by CBCI in 2010 lists the following objectives:

a. To facilitate change in the mindsets of women and men so that they relate to each other with respect and dignity.

b. To ensure fulfilment of the human rights of women especially of the marginalized groups.

c. To ensure that all Church ministries, policies, structures, procedures and programmes are gender sensitive and gender balanced.

d. To make provisions for adequate human and material resources to achieve the objectives.[43]

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[39] *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 3.

[40] *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 31.

[41] Letter by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, October 28, 1995.

[42] Letter by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, October 28, 1995.

[43] *Gender Policy of the Catholic Church of India*, New Delhi: CBCI Center, 2010, 11.

The CBCI has taken a bold step forward by articulating the guiding principles of the Gender Policy, which include statements such as "equality and dignity of all human persons form the basis of a just and humane society"; "women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality"; and "gender equality is cross-cutting issue that needs to be integrated in all the commissions, church bodies, institutions, policies and programs of the Church." What is praiseworthy is also the fact that the document short-listed eight important areas of concern and made policies and prepared strategies for implementation.[44] The implementation of this policy will definitely enhance the life and uphold the dignity of women in the Church and enable women to make a significant contribution to the life and mission of the church in India.

8. Conclusion

The stories of biblical women give us a glimpse of the actual creative power and wisdom of women as shapers of tradition and makers of history. These stories challenge us to uphold the dignity of women as God's beloved daughters created in God's image and likeness as well as to promote their active participation in the mission of the Church. The teachings of the Church recognise and appreciate the fact that women with their manifold resources devote themselves to the service of the Church.

No one disputes the fact that women make significant contributions in the process of liberation and community building.[45] However, the Indian Church has to go a long way in giving women their rightful place in the Church. Theological illiteracy is indeed one of the reasons for the subordination of women in the Church. Adequate biblical and theological

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[44]The areas include women and family; women and education; women and health; women and social involvement; special areas of concern such as rights of the girl child, Tribal and Dalit women, violence against women, women in difficult circumstances, and trafficking and sexual abuse; women's life in the Church (women and CBCI; women and diocesan social service societies; women's representation and participation in church bodies; formation of consecrated women and seminarians); research, documentation and dissemination of information; and networking. See *Gender Policy of the Catholic Church of India,* 14-37.

[45]For example, Pearl Drego, "Women Theologizing: Beginnings of Feminist Theologies and Their Concerns," *Jeevadhara* 40, 237 (2010), 232-52; Shalini Mulackal, "Political Economy of Participation: Women in the Life and Mission of the Church," in *Ecclesia of Women in Asia: Gathering the Voices of the Silenced*, ed. E. Monteiro and A. Gutzler, Delhi: ISPCK, 2005, 184-194 and Rekha M. Chennattu, "The Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* and Women's Mission in the Church," *Vidyajyoti* 74, 4 (2010), 300-304.

formation will empower women to play their rightful role in the Church. In addition to the ongoing theological formation and empowerment of women, what seems appropriate in handling these issues is the strategy of constructive dialogues in view of challenging and changing the gender stereotypes in the Church and society. An ongoing transformative process among women as well as men is an imperative for the realization of the full humanity of women proclaimed by Jesus as free daughters of God created in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:28). In the present context of ever increasing alienation and brokenness in the world, a more dynamic partnership between men and women and an inclusive leadership can be a transforming grace in the life and mission of the Church.

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TRANSGENDERISM IN MALAYSIA

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1. Introduction

Sexuality and gender are parts of the natural identity of human beings that have been given ample attention within socio-cultural and political studies around the world. The change of gender and sexuality apparently affect the sexuality of both the male and the female to varying degrees, while socio-cultural factors influence sexual behaviour, as well as gender relation and the sense of responsibility in such relations.

As a social phenomenon, social practice is often influenced by the religion where the issues of transgenderism are concerned. While some traditional religions are more relaxed in adjusting to social changes or accepting transgender community, religions like Islam and Christianity are said to have low tolerance towards transgender. This leads in some cases to tension in the Muslim and Christian societies. The attention accorded to the issues of transgender in the modern socio-cultural, political and religious discourse show that there is a need for Islam and Christian authorities to clarify their position on such matters, provide reassurance for its believers and treat emerging questions on the basic human rights of transgender community and accepting them as part of the society.

It is undeniable that the current discussions on gender and sexuality are largely influenced by Western socio-cultural practices. Some current views and practices on gender and sexuality are not consistent with traditional Western Christian and Islamic values. On the other hand, it is hard to ignore the influence of Western socio-cultural views and practices on various aspects of life and on the intellectual engagement with world cultures and religion. Islam and its believers are not exempted from this either, since the normative Islamic values may not be totally adhered to by Muslims, while local cultural norms and activities may not conform to all basic principles of Islam.

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In Malaysia, there are various forms of open social transitions that have long been in existence, even though they conflict with the religious beliefs there. One of the biggest challenges faced by the transgender community in Malaysia is that they are excluded from decisions that affect their welfare, livelihood and legal status. Malaysians generally shun the transgender community who are locally known as the *Mak Nyahs* (Transgender women or male to female transgender individuals) or *Pak Nyahs* (Transgender men or female to male transgender individuals). Social stigma and marginalization are often associated with poor psychological adjustment and increased psychological distress, both critical predictors of high-risk behaviour.[1] Many *Mak Nyahs* are categorised of low social status and forced to work as sex workers due to the rampant discrimination while seeking employment. Employers often reject *Mak Nyahs* on the basis of their appearance and gender expression disregarding their qualifications. The general perception towards transgender individuals is that all their problems are regarded to be of their own doing.

The objectives of the present research are to understand and determine the issues faced by the transgender community in Malaysia viewed in three aspects – the perspective of Islam, the socio-cultural point of view and from the transgender community members themselves. This article does not pretend to be a comprehensive and conclusive discussion of all issues that the transgender community faces in Malaysia. It only covers the perspective of Islam towards transgenderism in Malaysia because most of the *Mak Nyahs* in Malaysia are Muslims and Islam is the official and only religion in Malaysia that has religious rulings against some of the practices of the transgender community. The targeted transgender individuals for questionnaire and interview are all from the Pink Triangle Foundation, which is one of the few non-government organizations that are active and dedicated to help transgender community in Malaysia.

This research is also done to indirectly raise the awareness of the Malaysian government and public towards the diversity of gender and sexuality. Concurrently, it is an effort to encourage acceptance of the transgender community as part of the society, increasing the attention given to the transgender community's public health and welfare.

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[1]Bockting, W. O., Robinson, B. E., Rosser, B. R. "Transgender HIV Prevention: A Qualitative Needs Assessment, *AIDS Care*, 10, 1998, 505-525.

2. Background

Though there are many researches on this phenomenon, so far, there is no conclusive scientific explanation to transgender individual existence. Genetic influences and prenatal hormone levels, early experiences, and experiences later in adolescence and adulthood have been suggested as factors that may contribute to the development of transgender identities. Biologically a person with XY chromosomes is generally considered male and a person with XX chromosomes as female. However, there are also people with XXY, XYY, etc.; yet these genetic differences may or may not contribute to the transgenderism of a person. Some medical theories claim that hormones fluctuations or imbalances or the use of certain medications during pregnancy may cause intersex or transgender conditions. Other researches indicate that there are links between transgender identity and brain structure. Psychological factors are also suggested as the reason for the existence of transgender individuals. Some of the transgender persons, however, are aware of the fact that they are transgender from their earliest memories. Many transgender individuals feel that their gender identity is an innate part of them, an integral part of who they were born to be.

We conclude that sex and gender are complex issues and a variety factors that cause one to become a transgender individual are still unknown. Many factors are at work in making individuals the persons they are and there is no one reason causing people to be transgender. It is quite likely that there are different causes for different individuals.

Activists have estimated that there are around 100,000 transsexuals in Malaysia.[2] The number of transsexuals in the capital alone is estimated to be 50,000. This estimation indicates that more than one out of every 200 individuals in Malaysia is a transsexual.[3] In Malaysia, the term 'transsexual' generally refers to male transsexuals, although there are also female transsexuals.[4] The number of female transsexuals is, however,

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[2]"Malay Transsexual Loses Court Bid to Change Gender," http://news.yahoo.com/malay-transsexual-loses-court-bid-change-gender-053645639.html, Accessed 9 November 2011.

[3]Wong, E. L., *Neither Here Nor There: the Legal Dilemma of the Transsexual Community in Malaysia.* http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/gender_issues/neither_here_nor_there_the_legal_dilemma_of_the_transsexual_community_in_malaysia.html, Accessed 9 November 2011].

[4]Teh, Y. K., "Understanding the Problems of *Mak Nyahs* (Male Transsexuals) in Malaysia," *South East Asia Research* 6 (1998), 165-180.

small compared to male transsexuals.[5] The increasing number of transgender individuals in Malaysia has caught the government's attention. In 2000-2001, the Women and Family Development Ministry announced its intention to look into the problems of the transsexual community, and to provide as much assistance as they could.[6] Prior to that, there was no ministry regarded as appropriate to hear and handle issues pertaining to the transgender community, leaving the community to continue to be heavily marginalised, underrepresented and misunderstood by the society of Malaysia. Malaysian government and public need to pay more attention to understand transgender persons, their needs, and welfare as well as their legal status and consider them as part of the Malaysian community.

3. History of the Term Transgender

The term transgender was first introduced in print by Virginia Prince, an American transgender activist in the 1960s.[7] However, the term has only been popularly used since the 1970s. It was used to describe people who live a cross-gender lifestyle without undergoing any sex change or sex reassignment surgery. In the 1980s, the meaning of the term expanded further and became popular as a term which carried the meaning of all those with a gender identity that did not match their assigned gender at birth. However, in the 1990s, the term took on a political dimension as an alliance covering all those who have at some point not conformed to the gender norms, and the term is used in a way as to question the validity of those norms and also to pursue equal rights and anti-discrimination legislation, which then further led to the widespread usage of this term in the media, academic world and law.

In an influential essay that marked the emergence of "transgender studies," Susan Stryker describes "transgender" as

> an umbrella term that refers to all identities or practices that cross over, cut across, move between, or otherwise queer socially constructed sex/gender boundaries. The term includes, but is not

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[5]Khairuddin, Y., Low, W. Y., Wong, Y. L., "Social and Health Review of Transsexuals," Seminar *mak nyah ke arah menentukan identiti dan status mak nyah dalam masyarakat*, Law Faculty, University of Malaya, 1987.

[6]Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare Japan, "Healthy Next Generation: Strengthening Joint Collaboration Between Health and Social Welfare," Country Report: Malaysia of The 6th ASEAN & Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies, Tokyo, 2008.

[7]Ekins, R., King, D., *Pioneers of Transgendering: The Life and Work of Virginia Prince*, http://www.gender.org.uk/conf/2000/king20.htm, Accessed 1 November 2011.

limited to, transsexuality, heterosexual, transvestism, gay drag, butch lesbianism, and such non-European identities as the Native American *berdache* or the Indian *Hijra*.[8]

Joanne Herman referred transgender as individual with alternate identity (how you feel) and/or gender expression (how you look and act).[9] The American Psychological Association defines transgender individuals as people whose gender identity, gender expression, or behaviour differs from birth sex.[10]

There are certain common beliefs that inform the operative notions of sex and gender in the thinking of most people.[11] Among these beliefs are:

a. There are two and only two genders.

b. Genitals are the essential sign of gender, meaning that an anatomical male must have a masculine identity, and an anatomical female must have a feminine identity.

c. One's gender is invariant.

d. Everyone must be classified as a member of one gender or the other.

Subjects who fail to reflect these beliefs by manifesting the wrong configuration of body parts, behaviours, desires and overall comportment, are opening up the possibilities for calling those beliefs into question. This is because human beings still divide themselves according to the binary gender system, which is either a male or a female according to the sex a person is born into.[12]

These beliefs are characterized often as the "natural attitude" about gender and they are thought to be anchored in the human nature. The male or female and corresponding masculine or feminine dichotomy is said to be "natural," and that membership in one gender or the other is simply a reflection of an indisputable biological reality. In other words, it also means that only two genders are the fundamental organizing principle of experience and expression. This "natural attitude" is so pervasive and powerful that questioning it can appear absurd as gender in this sense is thought to be something intrinsic to our nature.

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[8]Stryker, S., *The Transgender Issue*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.

[9]Herman, J., *Transgender Explained for Those Who Are Not*, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009.

[10]"What Does Transgender Mean?" http://www.apa.org/topics/sexuality/transgender.aspx, 9 November 2011.

[11]Ilancheran, A., Genital Sex Reassignment Surgery: Male to Female Evolution of an Operative Technique, Singapore: National University of Singapore, 1989.

[12]Teh, Y. K., *The Mak Nyahs: Malaysian Male to Female Transsexuals*, Singapore, Eastern Universities Press, 2002.

4. Transgenderism and Islam

According to Islamic jurisprudence, humans can be divided into four groups: male, female, *khunsa* (hermaphrodites), and *mukhannis* (males whose behaviour is closely aligned to women's behaviour) or *mukhannas* (an effeminate male who does not want to change his sex). *Mukhannis* want a change in their gender identity, while *mukhannas* are considered "effeminate;" but they do not want to change their gender identity.[13]

The Hadith in Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 72, Number 774, states that "Narrated Ibn' Abbas: Prophet Muhammad cursed effeminate men who assume the manners of women and those women who assume the manners of men." According to the Hadith in Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 32, Number 4087, "Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Apostle of Allah cursed the man who dressed like a woman and the woman who dressed like a man."

Building on the notion that biology is destiny, a *khunsa* is permitted to change his or her gender via an operation and become either a man or a woman. However, as seen in the Hadith, cross-dressing violates the tenets of Islam. Thus, gender change is not permitted for *mukhannas*, out of the belief that he was created by God, and the operation would modify God's work and is an abomination in God's eyes. Neither does Islam allow *mukhannis* to use make up, dress as women nor express their chosen gender identity, since any act that masks the given sex of a person is seen as going against God's wishes. Therefore, Muslim *Mak Nyah* who usually cross-dress are also said to have violated the Islamic religion.

A process termed *ijtihād*[14] is used to deduce ruling on issues that so far have no direct guidance in the primary sources of *Shariah*. Among the examples of the issues are transgenderism, abortion, cloning and genetically modified foods. The end product of *ijtihād* is *fatwa*, an explanation from *Shariah* perspective given by a *mufti*[15] for any problem

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[13]Ramli, W. A., *Dilema Mak Nyah: Suatu Illusi*, Kuala Lumpur, Ututsan Publications, 1991.

[14]*Ijtihad* in the juristic terminology denotes the deduction of general rulings from religious evidence, or the effort exerted in extracting religious rulings and reaching a conjecture to religious rules; in the courts' jargon, this term means the set of judiciary judgments from which general rules may be deduced to settle similar disputes. See Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, "Ijtihad and Modernity in Islam," *Journal Islam Today*, 24-1428H/2007. http://www.isesco.org.ma/english/publications/Islam today/24/p1.php, Accessed 9 November 2011.

[15]A qualified scholar who is a Muslim, a reliable trustworthy person who never sinned, has broad knowledge of *fiqh* and Islamic law. He also had a sound mind and

as an answer for a query made either individually or collectively.[16] A *fatwa* is also a religious opinion on Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar on a specific issue after referring to *Al-Quran Al-Karim*, *Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah* (examples of prophets saying, actions,) *Al-Ijmak* (consensus), *Al-Qiyas* (analogy) and *Ijtihad* in the Islamic faith. A *fatwa* is often sought by the Muslims since they are divinely encouraged to ask guidance from those who are qualified. Interestingly, in Malaysia the *fatwa* is not conducted individually. The *fatwa* is normally issued officially by a council such as the National *Fatwa* Council (NFC). The NFC was established in 1970. Its function is to conduct decision-making processes on issues related to Islamic teachings.[17] In 1983, the NFC in Malaysia imposed a *fatwa* which prohibits gender change or sex change operations among the Muslims. Cross-dressing was also prohibited.

5. Police and Islamic Religious Authority Enforcement in Malaysia

Islam in Malaysia permits *khunsa* to undergo sex reassignment surgery so that they can become either male or female. *Mukhannis* or *mukhannas* are forbidden, however, from undergoing sex-reassignment surgery. *Mak Nyahs* consider themselves transsexuals who have accepted their femininity, but may not go for the sex reassignment surgery and do not mind the presence of their penis. As such, *Mak Nyahs* basically share the same characteristics as transsexuals in other parts of the world. As most *Mak Nyahs* in Malaysia are Muslims and are considered to violate the tenets of Islam, they have become non-entities in Malaysian society.[18] They have lost all their basic rights as a human being simply because they are "different from the others."[19]

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proper conduct and capable of comprehending one thing from another and drawing conclusion. See A. H. Al-Harrani, *Sifat al-Fatwa wa-al-Mufti wa-al-Mustafti* (Features of the Fatwa, Mufti and People Who Ask for Fatwa), Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1984, 13.

[16]Rispler-Chaim, V., *Islamic Medical Ethics in the Twentieth Century*, Leiden: Brill, 1993.

[17]Rahman, M. A., *Manhaj Fatwa Jawatankuasa Fatwa Kebangsaan* (Mechanism of Fatwa Issuance of the NFC), *Seminar Manhaj Pengeluaran Fatwa Peringkat Kebangsaan,* 5 -6 December 2006, Kuala Lumpur, 2006.

[18]Teh, Y. K, "Understanding the Problems of *Mak Nyahs* (Male Transsexuals) in Malaysia," *South East Asia Research* 6 (1998), 165-180.

[19]Sulastri Arriffin, Nasib Seorang Mak Nyah. *Malaysiakini*, www.malaysiakini.com/letters/44459, 1 November 2011.

The non-Muslim transsexual individuals can be charged with indecent behaviour which includes cross-dressing, under Section 21 of the Minor Offences Act 1955.[20] Under this section, they can be fined RM 25 to RM 50. As the term "indecent behaviour' has not been defined in the Act, it is up to the discretion of the police to determine what constitutes "indecent" behaviour. If the transsexual people caught by the police are Muslims, they can be sent to the Islamic Religious Affairs Department to be charged under Section 28, Syariah Criminal Offences Act 1997, for immoral behaviour, and are liable to a fine not exceeding RM 1000 or to imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both, at the *Shariah* Court for offences against the Islamic law. The Islamic religious authority, like the police, can also carry out raids among the Muslim community to identify wrongdoings against Islam.

6. Transgender and Basic Human Rights

The review of the relevant literature on transgender issues in Malaysia reveals a variety of views, some seem to support the position that transgender individuals should be given the liberty to choose their preferred gender, while some disagree due to religious belief which does not encourage nor allow transgenderism in life.

In the United Nations Press Conference on Issues of Exclusion Against People Living with HIV, Marginalized At-Risk Populations in year 2008, Laxmi Tripathi, Chair of ASTIVA, an organization for the support and development of sexual minorities mentioned that there is still no government had ever called for the protection and promotion of the transgender communities' basic human rights. Throughout the world, especially countries from the South, transgender individuals were also part of an ethnic group, yet they were forced to beg for basic services and health care or forced to be sex workers as there was no political will to recognize or defend their fundamental rights. They were often afraid to assert their rights, as they knew the authorities would not back them up.[21]

In Geneva on 16 September 2011, the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, Navi Pillay showed her support by urging

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[20]Dina Zaman, "Time to Engage *Mak Nyah*," *The Star Newspaper*, 2008. http://thestar.com.my/columnists/story.asp?col=awriterslife&file=/2008/8/14/columnists/awriterslife/22069684&sec=A+Writer, Accessed 1 November 2011.

[21]*Press Conference on Issues of Exclusion Against People Living with HIV, Marginalized At-Risk Populations*, http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2008/080611_HIV.doc.htm, Accessed 10 November 2011.

countries around the world to review their own laws, policies and practices to ensure that discrimination against transgender and intersex individuals is addressed in a systematic and effective way.[22] The Islamic Declaration of Human Rights created by the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), however, does not cover any rights for transgender community. Transgenderism is said to contradict the Islamic values, on issues or rights of the transgender community has not been discussed thoroughly among the OIC members so far.

7. Level of Acceptance towards Transgender Community

In this study, the researchers obtained 100 university students as respondents for a socio-cultural questionnaire and 20 transgender individuals as respondents for a transgender community questionnaire. For interview sessions, three *Mak Nyahs* and one Islamic religious authority were interviewed.

Ethnic Groups	Number of Respondents		Percentage (%)
	Male	Female	
Chinese	23	44	67
Malay	5	23	28
Indian	1	3	4
Others	1	0	1
Total	30	70	100
	100		

Socio-demographic Data of Respondents

The majority of the respondents (98%) were between 20 and 29 years old. Most of the respondents (36%) were Buddhists, followed by Muslim (29%), Christian (17%), Taoism (9%), Hinduism (4%) and others (4%). Only 31% respondents felt that members of the transgender community are accepted as part of the society in Malaysia, while 69% do not accept them as such. This is because religions such as Islam and Christianity prohibit transgenderism.

Out of the 31% respondents that accept the transgender community as part of the society in Malaysia, 42% respondents said that the transgender community is accepted by the Malaysian society because they

[22]"Pillay Welcomed Australian Decision on Identity for Transgender and Intersex People," http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11384&LangID=E, Accessed 10 November 2011.

are human beings as well. 35% respondents said that the transgender community is accepted because they have the right to be who they want to be. There were 23% respondents who said that the community presents no harm to the society, therefore, there is no reason not to accept them as part of the society.

Conversely, out of the 69% respondents who disagreed to accept the transgender or transsexual community, most of the respondents (77%) said that transgenderism is against the Malaysian laws and contradictory to the tenets of religion. There were 20% respondents who said that the transgender community was not accepted because of their low social status, especially transgender individuals who work as sex workers. The rest of the respondents (3%) did not accept transgender individuals as they felt that they have lost their minds.

74% respondents did not agree that human beings should be given the right to choose the gender they want. This is assumed to be caused by two main reasons: (1) transgenderism is a contradiction to the tenets of religion, and (2) transgenderism is causing the ratio of human gender to be imbalanced. However, out of the 100 respondents who took part in this questionnaire survey, 80% agreed that the Malaysian government and society should pay attention to the transgender community's welfare, livelihood and legal status.

Out of the 80% of respondents who agreed that the government and society should pay attention to the transgender or transsexual community's welfare, livelihood and legal status, there were 56% respondents who felt that priority should be on HIV/AIDS prevention, followed by their legal status, health and job opportunities. This was because most of the transgender individuals were sex workers, thus HIV/AIDS prevention was considered as the most important aspect that the government and society should pay attention to.

8. Transgenderism in Malaysia

The study managed to obtain 20 transgender individuals as respondents for the transgender community questionnaire. All of the respondents were *Mak Nyahs* from the Transsexual Drop-In Centre at Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur. The Transsexual Drop-In Centre has about 20 to 25 *Mak Nyahs* visiting daily. All of the respondents were above 30 years old and majority of them (70%) were between 30 and 39 years old. The majority of the respondents were Malays (80%). The religious affiliation of the respondents was 85% Islam and 10% Christian. 5% respondents

were non-believers. As for their educational qualification, the majority of the respondents had secondary schooling (80%). Only 10% respondents had attended institutes of higher learning. As for the others, 10% had only finished up to primary school.

At present, the majority of the respondents (35%) were unemployed, 25% had turned to the sex industry for their livelihood and 10% worked as administrative assistants or receptionists. Some of the respondents worked part time as entertainers, dancers or make up assistants. The majority of the respondents were unemployed because of their level of education and also due to the social stigma and discrimination towards them.

More than half of the respondents had an income of below RM 1000 and some of them were living below the poverty line of RM 500. As for the rest, 45% had an income of between RM 1001–3000. This result showed that the life as a transgender individual is very hard. A monthly income of RM 1000 is not enough to cover the basic living expenses especially living in Kuala Lumpur, a city with high living costs.

9. Issues and Constraints Faced by the Transgender Community

The majority of the respondents (45%) felt that Malaysians could not accept the transgender community as part of the society and 35% felt that Malaysians do. As for the rest, 20% felt that it depended as they felt that some Malaysians accepted them while some did not. When asked about the reactions of the society after knowing they were part of the transgender community, majority of the respondents (75%) said that they had been treated unfairly, as abnormal and some of them were scolded and humiliated. Only 25% said that they had been accepted like a normal person. There were 65% respondents who felt that they had been given a disapproving look when walking along the streets, 20% respondents felt they are treated unfairly and humiliated by Malaysian society in general. Only 15% respondent had not faced any issues being transgender individual.

When asked about Malaysian culture and religious beliefs towards transgender community, 40% respondents claimed that religion does not accept the transgender community, causing them to be humiliated and discriminated by the society. 25% respondents said that they are deemed as committing a sin because Islam does not allow transgenderism. 5% respondents claimed that the media has created a wrong perspective, causing the society to misunderstand the transgender community. As for the rest, 15% respondents said that they were indifferent and 15% of them had no comment.

Majority of the respondents (70%) said that the Malaysian government should pay more attention to the transgender community's human rights. 79% respondents said that the Malaysian government should pay more attention to transgender individual's livelihoods by providing jobs instead of discriminating against them. 36 % respondents said it was important to pay attention to their legal status and health care. Most of the respondents felt that the most critical issue faced by the transgender community was the absence of the basic human right to live as normal as other citizens in Malaysia.

10. Findings from the Interview Sessions

10.1. Interview with Sulastri

Sulastri (pseudo name) is the manager, and also an outreach worker at the Transsexual Drop-In Centre at Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur. She is a *Mak Nyah* but she has not and will not undergo sex change to become a female because for her, gender and sexuality are two different matters. Besides that, the laws in Malaysia also prevent a transgender individual from having a sex change surgery. This is because it is hard for a *Mak Nyah* to apply for a female identity card or passport. However, most of her *Mak Nyah* friends have gone for sex change in Bangkok as there is no such facility in Malaysia since 1983.

Sulastri feels that Malaysian society should discover the diversity of gender and sexuality and accept the transgenders as part of the society. Transgenderism is not a religious issue, and to press charge a transgender individual for being a cross-dresser is unacceptable. Transgenderism is not an offence and the law cannot charge a person for who they are.

Sulastri revealed that almost all of the Muslim transgender individuals feel disheartened when they are considered committing offence for becoming who they are. Yet, it does not change their minds about being *Mak Nyah*. Moreover, Sulastri personally does not care what the religious authority will do when a Muslim is deceased; for her, it is just a ritual and she is the one who is going to answer to God, not the religious authority.

10.2. Interview with Manis

Manis (pseudo name) is one of the outreach workers at the Transsexual Drop-In Centre at Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur. She graduated from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). She is currently working as an administrative assistant in a private company. Manis considers herself as a *Mak Nyah* even though she has yet to take hormones to have breasts, or go for sex change.

Manis wishes she was born as a female so that every constraint she faces would fade away. She became aware that she had been assigned to the wrong gender when her thinking, mannerism, behaviour and such was opposite from the norm. In her case, she definitely agrees to have a sex change operation in order to complement the look and feel "perfect" as a female. Yet, financial limitation is one of the main factors that hold her back from going for a sex change operation. Besides, her mother was against trangenderism.

Manis wishes that the Malaysian society would try to understand the needs and the plights of the transgender community as human beings like any other people around the world. They deserve the right to live. Manis also mentioned that it must be misunderstandings that cause the transgender community not to be accepted by Malaysian society. From the religious point of view, Manis feels that the misinterpretation of the religious books by the Islamic religious authorities have caused the social stigma that marginalized the transgender community. It is ironic to note that some Islamic countries like Iran allow sex reassignment surgery, but not Malaysia.

10.3. Interview with Nisha

Nisha (pseudo name) is an outreach worker at the Transsexual Drop-In Centre at Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur. She is a Hindu-Muslim who has undergone a breast implant surgery but not the sex change operation. Nisha considers her childhood to have been unhappy due to family affairs. Nisha was raised by her mother's family, while her brother was raised separately by her father's family. Nisha started to feel and think like a female when she was 7 years old. She used to wear female clothing, make up and even wear her mother's high heels when she was a child. She was never forced to wear female clothes and her mother had never been hard on her when she wore female clothes. She also liked to play with female friends and often dreamt of being a girl with breasts and getting married to a man when she was just a child.

Nisha's decision for being a *Mak Nyah* was hardly accepted by her family members. Since then, she left her home and stayed with her *Mak Nyah* friends in Kuala Lumpur. Nisha once worked as a receptionist. Yet, she revealed that time has changed and things were very different now. Most of the *Mak Nyahs* are currently jobless due to the social stigma created by media and religious authorities. Some of them are forced to work in the sex trade to earn a living. Even Nisha herself once worked as a sex worker. It was unpleasant but she did it for survival.

According to Nisha, Malaysian society is still not ready to accept them as part of the society. The understanding of the transgender community among the public is still very low. Thus, she feels that unless the public is educated about the diversity of gender and sexuality, discrimination towards the transgender community will continue. There was an unfortunate case involving one of her *Mak Nyah* friends the day before Nisha was interviewed. Nisha's *Mak Nyah* friend, who works as a sex worker, was abandoned at a highway in Malaysia and was brutally beaten up. Yet, when they went to file a report at the nearest police station, the police ignored them and asked them to leave.

Nisha strongly feels that transgender persons are born with the nature to become a *Mak Nyah*. To Nisha, it is her innate nature and a gift of God. Thus, it is not right that Islam prohibits gender change. For Nisha, God creates everything, including the nature of *Mak Nyahs*. Thus, she decided to be who she really is, and she will go for a sex change in Bangkok when she has the financial means.

Besides that, contrary to most Islamic religious authorities saying that a *Mak Nyah* is influenced by her friends or family to become a *Mak Nyah*, Nisha says otherwise. She has her life experience as important evidence. Nisha and her brother were raised separately in different families due to the events that happened in their home. Up to the day they were separated, Nisha and her brother had never demonstrated any characteristics of a *Mak Nyah*. Yet, when she met him again after 18 years, they had both become *Mak Nyahs*. So, the claim that *Mak Nyahs* are influenced by family members causing them to become a *Mak Nyahs* is inaccurate.

11. The Religious Interpretation on Transgenderism in Malaysia

As seen in the Hadith (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 72, Number 774; Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 32, Number 4087), cross-dressing or for a man to behave and wear clothes like a woman is said to contradict the Islamic religion. Therefore, the Muslim *Mak Nyahs* who usually cross-dress are said to have violated the tenets of Islam.

Anisah binti Ab Ghani, Islamic expert from the University Malaya, explains that the factors that cause one to become a transgender individual are most probably due to the influences of the surrounding. These include the influences from friends and also the family. A male who becomes a *Mak Nyah* is said to be influenced by his friends who are also *Mak Nyahs*.

According to Anisah, family members also could play an important role in preventing transgenderism from happening. Early education is the main factor. It is said that in one family, when the son's hormone testosterone is lower compared to the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, and he is not taught not to dress like a girl, sooner or later he will become a *Mak Nyah*. Conversely, if the son is taught to dress like a boy and act like a boy, he will never become a *Mak Nyah*.

In Islam, being a *Mak Nyah* is deemed as committing a sin as transgenderism is said to be a violation of the religion. Thus, *Mak Nyah* should blame no one when they are being discriminated or humiliated as Islam does no wrong (although, as explained, the failure to prevent the change can be put on the family to begin with) and a Muslim *Mak Nyah* should be following the teachings of Islam. Human beings are not allowed to challenge or go against God's will.

To the question, "Everything is created by God, so is the thinking and mindset of the *Mak Nyah* to become who they are, but why can't Islam accept *Mak Nyah*?"asked by one of the *Mak Nyahs*, Anisah responded that human beings are also given the wisdom to choose the right things to do, thus there is no excuse for one to blame God after he or she is influenced by things that opposes the good and the right.

Therefore, as for the issues on transgenderism, Anisah's advice to *Mak Nyahs* in Malaysia is:

1. Accept who you are as what God has given to you.
2. Obey every teaching of Islam. God is never wrong. Muslims should be the ones who follow the teachings of Islam.
3. *Mak Nyahs* can speak or even behave "effeminately" but they need not cross-dress or change their gender and sex.

The *fatwa* has diversely affected Malaysia's transgender community. Some of them have accepted the ruling, and agree that God's will cannot and should not be challenged as religion is part of their upbringing. They are deemed as committing a sin if they challenge or go against God's will. However, there are still many transgender individuals who identify and feel so strongly as a "complete woman". Therefore, since the enforcement of the *fatwa*, several transgender individuals have gone to neighbouring countries like Thailand or Singapore for the sex reassignment surgery. There was a case in which one of the Muslim respondents in this research study decided not to believe in *Allah* as the Islamic religious authorities in Malaysia do not recognize the transgender community as part of the Malaysian society.

The prohibition on cross-dressing assumes great significance in Muslim *Mak Nyah* daily lives, since they are not allowed to pray in mosques when dressed as women. They are often forced to worship at home, even though for Muslims it is more meaningful to pray in groups. The Islamic ban on sex changes also affects the death rituals of transsexual individual. Certain rituals in the religion are gender specific. For example, the body of a deceased Muslim has to be bathed by someone of the same sex. But because the religion does not acknowledge sex change, a transsexual would be treated as a man even if he has had the operation, and would presumably be bathed by a man.

The tolerance of transgenderism in the Muslim community, however, varies from one geographical area to another. Hence, the extent of marginalization, rejection, and discrimination by Malaysian society and by the state differ as well. It is said that the enforcement of the religious edicts or *fatwa* by the police and Islamic authority is based on the Muslim Religious Department in each state in Malaysia. Kelantan is said to have the highest level of rejection of the transgender community.

Islam is the official religion and it is the only religion in Malaysia that has official religious rulings against some of the practices of the transgender community. And as for the non-Muslim transgender individuals, they are not under formal religious constraints, yet they are still not accepted in society as the police can still carry out raids and arrest them for "indecent behaviour" although Buddhism and Hinduism could accept the transgender persons. Although the Muslim transgender individuals in Malaysia, who make up the majority of the transgender community, share similar characteristics with other transgender individuals in other countries, many of them are certain it is innate. And as for Muslim *Mak Nyahs*, they have accepted the fact that they are not allowed to undergo sex surgery due to their religious beliefs and objections from family members. It could, therefore, be said that the Muslim *Mak Nyahs* are influenced to a large extent by their religion. However, though to many of them, cross-dressing and the deep feeling that they are female are enough to have the identity of *Mak Nyahs*, they wish the Malaysian society and Islamic religious authority could understand them for being a *Mak Nyah* instead of discriminating and humiliating them, or even carry out raids to put them in prison.

12. Conclusion

This research has shown that the transgender or transsexual phenomenon cannot be adequately explained by social factors alone. It is a complex phenomenon that needs explanations considering biological, environmental, as well as social factors.

The transgender community is essentially a non-entity in Malaysian society, and the majority of them have been brought up with this belief. Although many of the transgender individuals feel that they would be happier if they underwent the sex change surgery, they are reluctant to do so. They believe that if they had pursued it, they will face greater challenges to their legal status. For example, constraints faced when applying for a female identity card or passport and uncalled for issues when travelling abroad.

With Islam being the official religion of the country, most of the Muslim transgenders' lives are also challenged by the enforcement of the religious edicts by the police and the Islamic authority. As explained before, transgender individuals can be charged for indecent behaviour, cross-dressing or behaving like a female, under the Minor Offences Act 1955 or under the *Shariah* Law. Although this has never discouraged transgender individuals from cross-dressing, many of them would not go for sex change due to the prohibitions of religion and law in Malaysia. Cross-dressing and the feeling of being a female are said to be enough for the transgenders to have the identity as a *Mak Nyah*. They have accepted that they are *Mak Nyahs*, even though the Malaysian society and government do not recognize them as a person with a female identity.

With regards to non-Muslim transgenders, they share similar characteristics with their Muslim counterparts. Since there are no official restrictions imposed on them, many lead the life they prefer, including going for a sex change operation overseas if they can afford it, even though their religion (Christianity) may not accept transgenderism. They also face fewer problems with family members. Occasionally, they are caught by the police during raids for indecent behaviour under the Minor Offences Act 1955; this does not deter them from cross-dressing or going for sex change surgeries to lead a better life.

In conclusion, most of the transgender individuals are generally influenced by their culture and religious values, which shape their current identity. Yet, they consider themselves to be a transgender who has accepted that they are female at heart, although they are not allowed to undergo sex change surgery. Apart from that, as the world began to deal

with issues of sexual orientation, issues of gender identity remained in the closet as Malaysia had no policy that would support transgender community. In the past few years, this has begun to change. Transgender community of Malaysia are coming out of the closets and it is perhaps time for the Malaysian government and society to re-examine the current policies and practices in order to ensure that the transgender community can have fairer treatment. The public should at least try to understand more about the transgender community before any inaccurate assumptions or interpretations are made. Transgender individuals are human beings like any other citizens and they deserve the basic human rights to live in the society.

Lastly, it is hoped that with this research the society will be able to accept the transgender community and thus, stop any undue humiliation and marginalization. The changing of Malaysia's policies to better cater for gender identity would be one of the powerful ways to send a message that debates are necessary, given the understanding that as much as transgenderism is seen as an innate condition, the right of the majority in the society to believe in their perception that transgenderism may also just be a state that is the product of a certain way of living that need not be so to begin with, should also be given a fair hearing. For example there are innumerable effeminate men who leave normal life as fathers, husbands and the general male figure in Malaysian society.

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THE PERSON: PROJECT OF NATURE, NURTURE AND GRACE
Philosophical Investigations after Wittgenstein

Jose Nandhikkara♦

1. Introduction

Wittgenstein once said: 'I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.'[1] In this paper I present a conception of human person: We are rooted in nature, formed by nurture and sustained by God; positively we act upon the world, build up the community and move towards God. The methodology is Wittgensteinian, that of assembling reminders, criss-crossing the terrain, and providing an *Übersicht* of the person from a religious perspective. I do not claim that this is a general thesis that philosophy can establish nor do I claim that this is the religious point of view that Wittgenstein himself held; rather this is how Wittgenstein's philosophical investigations stimulated me to thoughts of my own. This is, to use a Wittgensteinian expression, a form of life: how we live, move and have our being.

'Know thyself' is the fundamental philosophical quest; it is a quest for the meaning of life. This philosophical tradition also insists that the unexamined life is not worth living. Wittgenstein related the ultimate questions regarding the meaning and the purpose of life with belief in God:

> To believe in a God means to understand the question about the meaning of life.
>
> To believe in a God means to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter.
>
> To believe in God means to see that life has a meaning.[2]

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[1]Rhees, ed., *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, 94.

[2]Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961, 74.

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Following Wittgenstein, I describe human beings as persons living in relation to nature, community and God. This is a religious point of view, presenting being human as an ongoing project to be realised by living the fundamental relations. Nature, fellow human beings and God are seen in this religious point of view, as persons and fitting partners, not as objects that are thrown against (*objectum*), or standing against (*gegenstand*) my project of self-realisation. My existence is fundamentally co-existence and pro-existence. Wittgenstein's sketches on human subjectivity help us not only to reject the dualism of body and mind but also to treat person as 'a living human being' affirming our *being* in nature and *becoming* by nurture. We are not just natural beings; we are also formed by community and become persons through a dynamic process.

Beginning with Descartes, modern philosophy spoke of a self-conscious and autonomous thinking substance, independent of body and world. Modern Western society, to a large extent, rejects God and declares itself totally free and struggles to overcome limitations set by body, world and religion. In all these three fields – religion, philosophy and society – there is a persisting temptation to think of an autonomous self-conscious subject. Wittgenstein was indeed challenged and puzzled by the apparently mysterious and elusive nature of 'self'/'ego'/'I'. He struggled himself to clarify the confusions regarding the nature of self, both in his early and later philosophy. At the beginning of the *Blue Book*, he identified a source of 'philosophical bewilderment:' 'a substantive makes us look for a thing that corresponds to it.'[3] Applied to problem of person, philosophers tend to ask 'What sort of entity is person?' and come up with a number of answers, which are far from our actual life. From a Wittgensteinian point of view, the task of philosophy, is to raise the questions 'How is the word 'person' used?' and 'What is the grammar of the word?' and to describe the grammar of the word that will provide us with a surveyable representation of the use of the word. A grammatical investigation of 'person' and related words would remind us of the obvious fact that persons are neither bodies nor bodiless selves, but beings with distinctive ways of life.

Human beings as individuals – complete in oneself and separate from others – would remain just as beings-in-the-world. Persons, however, are not merely beings-in-the-world but beings-together-with-others. Though we are born as natural beings, we become persons through nurture. Human babies are equipped with fewer instincts for survival compared with other

[3]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958, 1.

species in the animal kingdom and have long periods of infancy and maturation. Nurture comprises those aspects of human activity which are socially rather than genetically transmitted. In every significant event in human life, we could see the overlapping and criss-crossing of nature and nurture, individual and community. The making of a person and realising one's self is a joint venture of nature, nurture and grace. We begin by sketching landscape for the relation between body and soul in a living human being.

2. The Person: Body-Soul Unity

Descartes rightly observed that 'one can perfectly well engage in first-person thinking even though one is not in a position to keep track of oneself as a physical object.'[4] From the observation that 'I could suppose I had no body,' 'but not that I was not,' he, however, postulated an ego that owns and controls the body. To say that a human being has such-and-such a sort of body is not to imply that the person is a thinking thing that owns the body. Descartes, who argued for such a view, admitted that the soul is not merely present in the body as a sailor is present in a ship, but rather very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it, so that soul and the body form a unit.[5] They are two separate entities and it is the 'thinking thing' that owns and controls the body and their unity is contingent. To hold that 'the ego is mental'[6] is to place oneself in a long tradition starting from Plato of isolating the spiritual from the physical.

Wittgenstein argued that to say that 'a human being is not a body,' does not necessarily imply that some new entity besides body, namely, the ego, has been discovered.[7] It is equally true that a human being is not identical with ego or some other entity – a mind, soul, spirit or will. As I cannot identify my self with my body, I cannot do so with my mind. A human being is neither a body nor a mind. A human being, however, is not without a mind or a body. It is true that we do not assign psychological predicates to the body and its parts, but we cannot ascribe them to the mind either. Otherwise it would be the mind that sees, smells, feels, thinks, desires, decides, etc. This is a difficult situation, because we want to say:

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[4]Campbell, J. *Past, Space and Self*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995, 90.

[5]Descartes, Sixth Meditation.

[6]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, 73.

[7]Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-35: From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald*, A. Ambrose, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979, 60.

'it cannot be a 'nothing'.' To avoid this embarrassment, 'I presuppose the inner in so far as I presuppose a human being.'[8] In the very next sentence, however, Wittgenstein remarks: 'The 'inner' is a delusion. That is: the whole complex of ideas alluded to by this word is like a painted curtain drawn in front of the scene of the actual word use.' The 'inner' is a delusion, if we think it is something similar to other physical objects that can be located, named, described and defined. It is also not like the inside of something, a box, for example, or something like an inner room or inner cave. This is not a denial of 'inner;' it means the inner cannot be spoken of in the language of object and designation. The inner corresponds to human subjectivity.

According to Wittgenstein, the assumption of the ego as an independent entity results from philosophical confusions. When we are forced to recognise that the word 'I' is not used, in some important occasions, to designate a body, we look for an immaterial one. 'Where our language suggests a body and there is none: there, we should like to say, is a spirit.'[9] This is because of the bewitching power of the picture of the language in which words always name objects. According to this picture, the meaning of a word is always the object for which the word stands. If body is not a proper object for self, we feel forced to posit an immaterial substance – the real ego. In his view, 'to say that the ego is mental is like saying that the number 3 is of a mental or an immaterial nature, when we recognize that the numeral "3" isn't used as a sign for a physical object.'[10] What we need to do is to remind ourselves the fact that 'inner' is not a name of a material or immaterial object. That is not denying the reality of the inner. What is resisted is our temptation to treat it as a material or ethereal object. We should remind ourselves that the inner is not bodily; 'inner' does not refer to something in the way 'body' refers to body. It is not the inner that is deluding; it is to assume the inner as an object, material or ethereal, that is the delusion. 'There are inner and outer concepts, inner and outer ways of looking at human beings. Indeed there are also inner and outer facts – just as there are for example physical and mathematical facts. But they do not stand to each other like plants of

[8]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, ed., G. H. Von Wright, and Heikki Nyman, trans., C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue, London: Basil Blackwell, 1990, 84.

[9]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M. Anscombe, trans., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953, 39.

[10]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, 73.

different species.'[11] They relate to each other in a variety of ways in the stream of our life and thought. According to Wittgenstein, 'The inner is tied up with the outer not only empirically, but also logically.'[12] Wittgenstein is realist about the inner; but we should not see it as an object similar to a material object. Wittgenstein does not assume that all that is real is empirical. According to him, 'Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing'.[13] In his famous example of shopping for 'five red apples,' he has shown that we use words differently. 'Five', 'red' and 'apple' are meaningful words and they are used differently in our language and life. 'Body' and 'soul' are used differently.

To see the empirical as well as logical inter-relations of 'body' and 'soul,' we have to examine how these words and other similar words are used in our actual language use. Following Wittgenstein, instead of searching for a Merkmal-definition of 'soul/mind/will,' we should better raise the question: 'How is the word 'soul/mind/will' used?' As with the use of 'my body,' the expression 'my mind/soul/will' points to a distinction between 'soul/mind/will' and the possessor. We want to draw attention to the fact that it is not the soul that perceives, thinks, remembers, loves, wills, believes, etc.; it is the human being who is the subject of these predicates. It is wrong to give a pre-eminence to the soul. Wittgenstein does not want to treat 'the head and heart as loci of the soul.'[14] 'What sort of entity is the 'inner'?' like 'What sort of entity is a number?' can only be answered insisting that the 'inner,' like a number, is not an entity of a sort; neither empirical nor metaphysical, neither bodily nor spiritual. But it is not a 'nothing' either. It is not just a matter of opinion that a living human has a soul (mind/spirit/will).[15] That a living human being has a soul is my fundamental attitude in dealing with living human beings. It is not, however, something about which we can talk in the language of physical things. The inner confers a kind of unity to the living human being that is categorically different from the unity conferred by the body. It is a unity that is captured especially from within, from the first-person perspective. According to Luntley, 'having a mind involves having a point of view

[11]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, 63.

[12]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, 63.

[13]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, G. E. M. Anscombe, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, 325.

[14]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, R. Rhees, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974, 106.

[15]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 178.

upon the world in the sense that it involves experiencing the world in a certain way.'[16] The subject's point of view, though not expressible in the language of empirical sciences, is something very important to our life as human beings.

We use 'mind,' 'soul,' 'spirit,' 'reason,' 'will,' etc., to refer to what we indicate by human subjectivity. If we look and see at all these terms and their use what we observe is 'a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.' There is no single property (or a sum of properties) like a fibre that runs through the whole length of the thread, on the part of all and only phenomena so called but only overlapping of many fibres. A grammatical investigation gives a description of the various uses of these words clarifying the existence and nature of the inner. It is used in our language as a principle to unite all the mental, rational and spiritual characteristics, something characteristic of human beings. Though we can make sense of the demonstrative 'this body,' we cannot make sense of 'this mind (soul/spirit/will).' We could only say, 'I meant my mind, but could only point to it via my body.'[17]

Human beings as a rule are recognized by the appearance of their bodies. The characteristics of a human body do change, but gradually and within a recognizable range. 'We are inclined to use personal names in the way we do, only as a consequence of these facts.' 'If facts were different,' for example, 'all human bodies which exist looked alike' or 'the shape, size and characteristics of behaviour periodically undergo a complete change,' then the use of names would also change. Thus the use of the concept of a person depends on certain contingent facts. This, as far as philosophy is concerned, should be treated not only as an empirical fact but also as a logical fact; for 'The inner is tied up with the outer logically, and not just empirically.'[18]

I can talk about myself and in this regard sometimes I do talk about my body, which is a material thing that can be identified and described like other material bodies in physical terms. Accordingly, I ascribe myself material characteristics like height, weight, colour and my body is just like and part of the world among others, among beasts, plants, stones, etc. A body, including my body, has some shape and occupies some space excluding other bodies. It

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[16]Luntley, M. *Reason, Truth and Self: The Postmodern Reconditioned*, London, New York: Routledge, 1995, 57.

[17]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, 66.

[18]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, 64.

could be perceived by the senses and could be moved to occupy other spaces. It could be picked out, identified, labelled and described like any other material thing. There are, however, important differences between material bodies and living bodies and between plants and animals and more importantly for our purpose between animals and human beings. 'Our attitude to what is alive and what is dead is not the same. All our reactions are different. – If anyone says: "That cannot simply come from the fact that the living move about in such-and-such a way and a dead one not," then I want to intimate to him that this is a case of the transition 'from quantity to quality'.'[19] This is a fundamental attitude.

Applied to human beings, 'having a body' is grammatically distinct from 'being a body' though we use both 'I have a body' and 'I am a body.' The distinctions with regard to the use of 'having' and 'being' with regard to 'body,' 'soul,' 'mind,' 'will,' etc. in relation to 'human being' are blurred. These expressions with 'having' are not anything like a human being owning something. I have two hands and they are part of my body; but my body and mind are not part of anything. I do have a special relation to my body. It is uniquely mine, not just like having land or other properties. Human beings are not, however, identical with their bodies. Though I am bodily, I am not my body. 'We can't substitute for "I" a description of a body.'[20] It cannot be used without a body either. Even mental and spiritual properties are expressed in and through the body. Although a human body reacts to a great variety of stimuli, even when I am asleep or unconscious, it is not the bearer of the sensations, moods, thoughts and so on. 'I' is not used here 'because we recognize a particular person by his bodily characteristics,'[21] a feature particularly obvious in first-person experiential propositions. We don't say 'Now I feel much better: the feeling in my facial muscles and round about the corners of my mouth is good.'[22] When I say, 'I feel much better' others understand me from the context and from the tone of my voice, expression in my face, and other fine shades of behaviour. 'It is always presupposed that the person who smiles is human, and not just that what smiles is a human body.'[23] The smile is expressed on the face and we can have a smile only on a human face and we cannot separate the smile from the face.

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[19]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 284.

[20]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, 74.

[21]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, 69.

[22]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. I, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, 454.

[23]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on The Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, 84.

We cannot separate the soul from the body: '"I noticed that he was out of humour." Is this a report about his behaviour or his state of mind? ("The sky looks threatening": is this about the present or the future?) Both; not side-by-side, however, but about the one via the other.'[24] The body is the medium by which the presence of the soul is brought about. It is in and through our bodies that we are present to the world and to fellow human beings and relate to them and live in collaboration and conversation. It is to be remembered, not just as an empirical fact but also as a logical fact, that 'human being' does not mean the same as 'this body,' although it 'only has meaning with reference to a body.'[25] We cannot drive a wedge between the body that expresses an idea of human action, and the body that is the subject matter of the idea of action, because it is part of the sense of human action that utterer and subject should be one and the same.[26] It is in this spirit we can understand his remark: 'The human body is the best picture of the human soul.'[27]

A picture of body can correspond to an idea (*Vorstellung*) of soul. We cannot have pictures of soul. A picture of body can, however, correspond to a *Vorstellung* of a soul. We look at photographs and portraits and see human beings not just bodies. We see the expression of soul in a face and in the bodily posture. We see happy, sad, serious, and fearful persons not just pictures of bodies. However, the picture itself is not soul nor does it stand equivalent to the word 'soul.' Words and pictures are used to represent imaginatively the soul; they are not soul(s). An idea of soul is not a picture of a soul, nor a picture of a body, nor the word 'soul.' It is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we should call a picture. The idea of soul certainly enters into the language-game in a sense; only not as a picture.[28] The word 'soul' cannot mean what it does by way of a picture qua picture: there cannot be a picture of soul; however, pictures can correspond to it. The idea of soul represents something for which there cannot be a picture; yet we typically use

[24]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, p. 179.

[25]Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-35*, 62.

[26]Kenny, A. *The Legacy of Wittgenstein*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 87.

[27]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, part II, 178.

[28]'The image of pain is not a picture and this image is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we should call a picture. – The image of pain certainly enters into the language game in a sense; only not as a picture.' Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 300. The meaning would be clearer if *Vorstellung* is translated as idea or concept rather than image.

pictures in our talking about soul. This is true also about what we say regarding 'mind,' 'spirit,' 'will,' 'inner,' etc. with necessary changes depending on the context. They are all pictured using pictures of body. 'Body' and 'soul' are, thus, used to speak about human beings. The expressions regarding body are interwoven with expressions regarding mind, soul, spirit, reason, will, etc. They do not stand for separate parts of the human person, but for the whole human being considered from different perspectives. All of them are interwoven to give a synoptic view of human beings.

At a certain stage in his pervasive and persistent attempts in clarifying the concepts regarding the human subject, Wittgenstein made the following illuminating remark: 'It comes to this: only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious.'[29] From an empirical point of view, it is merely a description, a common sense report. It is revealing, however, from a philosophical point of view; it puts an end to our struggles to decide between body and soul, matter and spirit as the essence of human being. The category of human being is drawn here as fundamental to our language-game; the basis of all our talk on human beings. Human being is what it is and is neither to be reduced to some other thing like body, mind, soul, spirit, reason, will, etc., though they are used in relation to the concept of 'human being,' nor is it a compound of such entities. We do speak of body, soul, mind, will, reason, spirit, etc., but we should not forget at any stage that we are speaking about human body, human soul, human mind, etc., and that the subject is always a living human being.

Human beings are neither bodies nor bodiless selves, but beings with distinctive psychophysical characteristics. The use of 'living human being,' as Evans observed, 'simply spans the gap between the mental and the physical, and is no more intimately connected with one aspect of our self-conception than the other.'[30] It is primitive in the sense that it is not an 'abstraction' from or a 'fiction' constructed out of other basic concepts. It is not to be analysed in terms of body or soul nor as that of an animated body or of an embodied anima. A human being is no more a thinking substance than a bodily thing. He/she is a living creature that perceives its environment, and responds in various ways with its own goals and purposes. In their responses to the environment human beings are creative to such an extent that they make the

[29]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 281.

[30]Evans, G. *The Varieties of Reference*, J. McDowell, ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, 256.

given world, a human world. To conceive them simply as automatons is not intelligible. A living human being is an embodied subject with active and passive bodily and spiritual (rational, emotional, volitional, etc.) powers and is substantially and creatively present in the world. We live, move and have our being in the world.

A human being cannot be reduced to 'body,' 'mind,' 'soul,' 'reason' or 'will' or a combination of all these or some of them. I may be proud or ashamed of myself without being proud or ashamed of my body or mind. I may hurt my foot, but it is I who suffer, not my foot. My foot may hurt, but it does not hurt itself; it hurts me and it is I who have hurt myself. I may be conscious of a sharp pain in my foot, but my head is neither conscious nor unconscious of it. 'It is a primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain'[31] and, 'if someone has a pain in his hand, then the hand does not say so . . . and one does not comfort the hand, but the sufferer: one looks into his face.'[32] It is human beings, not their bodily organs like eyes, ears, hearts, and brains that behave. A person sees with his eyes, and listens with his ears but eyes do not see nor do the ears hear. It is not like writing with a pen. Hearts beat and pump blood, but they do not fall in or out of love; it is human beings who love and take care. Emotions are exhibited in human face, tone of voice, bodily responses, and in other fine shades of behaviour. It is the human being who expresses thoughts, opinions, and beliefs in utterances and manifests them in deeds. Therefore, 'Instead of "attitude toward the soul" one could also say "attitude toward a human."'[33]

What we learn from these investigations is that the concept of person is to be treated as something fundamental. It can neither be reduced to bodily or mental characteristics nor be seen as a product of body and something else. Human being is a fundamental concept. There are no metaphysical definitions for human being and our inability to produce definitions or sufficient and necessary conditions or criteria for human subject is not ignorance. Nor is it the result of the depth or mystery of the topic; it is just a matter of the primitiveness and irreducibility of the concept of a 'living human being.'[34] We agree in our judgements regarding human beings and our attitude to human beings is different from our attitudes to other objects, living and non-living.

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[31]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, 540.

[32]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 286.

[33]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, 38.

[34]McGinn, *The Character of Mind*, Oxford: University Press, 1999, 146.

In all the sketches on self, person, I, body, mind, soul, will, consciousness, etc., we are to take into account the concept of living human being as fundamental. It is only in relation to such terms that human subjectivity can be expressed. Also those terms have their currency only in relation to 'human beings.' We can rightly use 'body,' 'mind,' 'soul,' 'will,' 'reason,' etc., with regard to human beings. We note the similarities and differences in the use of these words and understand their meanings in their contexts. 'What goes on within also has meaning only in the stream of life.'[35] Care is to be taken, however, not to reduce human subjectivity into any one or a definite grouping of them. We also look and see how these words and other related expressions are interwoven to give the fabric of human subjectivity. As Wittgenstein observed, '... one pattern in the weave is interwoven with many others'[36] and one has to see them in the context of the 'weave of our life.'[37]

The identity and continuity through time of a 'living human being' is intelligible in the context of human life, and it is just that continuity which allows us to talk about human beings, rather than just about points of views, pointilliste scatter of thoughts and random sequences of experiences. 'Prima facie, such continuity does not need anything underlying it of a mysterious and indefinable nature, any more than the continuity of a physical object needs to be thus supported.'[38] A living human being is not just a bundle of perceptions or a collection of points of views or a host of relations. He/she is living, dynamic and creative, and at the same time subject to bounds and bonds. The nature of such bonds and bounds to world, community and God will be made clear in the coming sections. It is the project of the thesis to present living human beings as rooted in and acting on the world, formed by and extended to the community and dependent on and oriented to God. At this stage I conclude with Evans, 'All the peculiarities we have noticed about 'I'-thoughts are consistent with and indeed, at points encourage, the idea that there is a living human being which those thoughts concern.'[39] The human being is indeed the best picture of human subjectivity. If someone insists on asking 'What is self?' we can simply answer, 'a living human being.' By nature we are human beings endowed with body and mind, reason and will,

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[35]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on The Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, 30.
[36]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 569.
[37]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, 174.
[38]Madell, *The Identity of the Self*, Edinburgh: The University Press, 1981, 10.
[39]Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, 256.

feelings and passions. How we develop them and become fully human depends on our nature as well as nurture. Being human is a joint venture of nature and nurture – that I present in the next section.

3. The Person: Product and Project of Nature and Community

As human persons are no more thinking substances than bodily things, they are no more natural beings than social beings. They are living creatures that perceive their environment, and respond in various ways with their goals and purposes. In their responses to the environment human beings are creative to such an extent that they make the given world, a human world. To conceive them simply as automatons and natural beings is not intelligible. Human persons are embodied subjects with active and passive bodily and spiritual (rational, emotional, volitional, etc.) powers and are substantially and creatively present in the world. We live, move and have our being in the world, both in the natural and the social world. Care is to be taken, however, not to reduce a person into either nature or society. One pattern in the weave is interwoven with many others and one has to see them in the context of the weave of our life. The conceptual clarification on nature and community throw light on who we are and how we live in conversation and collaboration with fellow human beings. As natural beings 'the world is my world;' as social beings, however, 'the world is our world.' By living in the world, we transform the world and make it a human world. Nature and community are not contraries nor do they stand at opposite poles. They are related to each other not just empirically but logically. 'The motto here', following Wittgenstein, 'is always: Take a wider look round.'[40]

The roles of nature and community are to be seen from the point of view of being person without reducing one to the other. It is equally wrong to deny the role of community in an attempt to secure the place of individuals or to present individuals as gifts of community. Human existence is coexistence and pro-existence giving due importance both to the individual and to the society. Persons are substantially present in the world, as subjects, engaging both with other subjects and objects in the world. It is tempting to think that a human being first exists in nature and, then, for the sake of growth and development, enters into all kinds of social contacts with others in the cultural world. Being in relation with others is, then, seen as something consequent and contingent – an important addition – to being an individual. Such an approach tends to speak of *der Mensch* – an individual complete in

[40]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 127.

itself and separate from others. It is true that living human beings, like other animals, interact directly in a physico-biological way within the spatio-temporal environment; but they live, move and have their beings as persons in the social world.

Human subjectivity is shown in the spatio-temporal world through one's substantial and creative presence and engagement with objects in the world. One is to be reminded, however, of the obvious fact that persons are not just natural beings. Persons are social beings who live in collaboration and conversation with other human beings in an inter-subjective world. This is not just something additional and consequent, but something constitutive and existential of being human. One has to see the fundamental similarities and differences in our engagement with things and other living human beings. Both of them constitute and shape our streams of life. This is not merely an empirical fact, but a conceptual fact that shapes the framework of a philosophical anthropology. Persons are not only rooted in the world of things but also formed by and extended to the world of persons. Being person is a joint venture of nature and community in which nurture plays a substantial role.

Persons are not just bundles of perceptions or collections of points of views or hosts of relations. They are living, dynamic and creative, and at the same time subject to bounds and bonds to world, community and God. Persons are rooted in and acting on the world, formed by and extended to the community and dependent on and oriented to God. By nature, we are human beings endowed with body and mind, reason and will, feelings and passions. How we develop them and become persons depend on our nature as well as community. A living human being is substantially present in the world in collaboration and conversation with fellow human beings. It is a dynamic and creative process of being person and becoming fully human, realising our potentialities. A person is not just present in the natural world in direct interaction with other objects in the world, but also in a community, where being and becoming fully human depend on interaction with fellow human beings. The notion of becoming fully human, does not mean that there are degrees of more or less in human beings. None of the human beings are less than human beings, even if some of the physical or mental faculties are not fully developed. What the notion of 'fully' picks up is that we are not just born; we are formed and we become; we are not merely finished products but continuous projects. There is a creative process in being human which is not completed by birth. It is a fundamental fact that we belong to a community; it is not just a homely

reminder of an empirical fact but a logical fact that functions as a basic presupposition in the way we live, move and have our being. It is an existentially fundamental fact of life that is given showing who we are and how we live in our forms of life.

It is an obvious fact of life that naturally we belong to a community and thereby to a culture. Belonging to a community does not necessarily mean that persons are always surrounded by other human beings. Even when persons are physically isolated they have fundamental openness and belongingness to other human beings. This is not something that to be argued in a theoretical way; it is something to look and see. We belong to a community in our characteristic ways of being human. A person in being present to the world naturally is present also to other human beings socially. Being present to others is characteristically different from being present to objects and this capacity is of enormous significance in the growth and development of a human being – on being a person. According to Archer,

> it is just as ineluctable that we have subject/subject relationships in the social realm as that we had subject/object relations in the practical world and bodily/environmental relations in the nature. The three together make up the human condition; they stem from our human nature and we would not be recognisably human in the absence of any of them.[41]

Limiting our engagements to the natural world of things significantly alters the character of our being persons.

> We could describe a person only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what one man is doing now, an individual action, but the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action.[42]

Our ways of being person involves fellow human beings. This is a conceptual point (not merely an empirical fact) that picks up the fact that we belong to a community. Here the question is also not on the theoretical possibility of a human life without any possible or actual contact with other human beings but on our characteristic ways of being person. Our investigations on person must look and see how persons actually live, move and have their being rather than building-up fantastic theories about language, thought and content in

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[41] Archer, *Being Human: the Problem of Agency*, Cambridge: University Press, 2000, 215.

[42] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 567.

abstraction. Life in its variety and complexity is the conceptual framework of anything that is significantly human.

A lot of stage-setting is presupposed for life as a person, including a shareable human nature and the uniformity of the nature of the world in which we live, move and have our being. This is what I learn from Wittgenstein when he uses expressions like 'stream,' 'weave,' 'web,' 'form,' 'hurly-burly' and 'bustle' of life. They make up not just the empirical but also the conceptual background against which a conceptual clarification on person is possible. According to Wittgenstein, 'Seeing life as a weave ... where one pattern is not always complete and is varied in a multiplicity of ways ... and is interwoven with many others.'[43] The necessary stability of our lives is provided by the interweaving of the many patterns rather than by any one single pattern. If one were to take away the surrounding contexts and the patterns in the weave, the web of collaboration and conversation, only empty marks, noises and movements would remain. Our common ways of acting, speaking and experiencing are the patterns in the weave of life. There is a certain regularity in the way persons are and the way the world is. How persons interact with the objects in the world give rise to similar sensations. When cold, we extend our hands towards the fire, but excessive heat lead us to withdraw them, and 'it is upon these prior physiological signifiers that our language of feelings is built and our emotional expressiveness is born.'[44] It is upon nature that community builds up and it is nurture that brings individuals to the realm of person.

In learning language, for example, we do not merely learn the pronunciation, spelling and syntax of words, but the forms of life which make those sounds and ink marks the words they are, play their role in the respective language-games – asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying, etc.[45] We learn words and we use them in various life situations as we move on. Wittgenstein rightly points out that we are given lessons neither in introspection nor in ostensive definition to use the word 'pain.' Instead, we learn words in certain contexts and those words have a function in the weave of life and the patterns are varied and interconnected. Similarly, we judge an action according to its background within the 'bustle of life.' This background is not 'monochrome,' but 'a very complicated filigree pattern,'

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[43]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 568, 569.

[44]Archer, *Being Human: the Problem of Agency*, 155.

[45]Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Scepticism, Morality and Tragedy*, Oxford: University Press, 1999, 177.

with a rich variety and a certain indefiniteness. It would be artificial to draw a conceptual boundary line where there is not some special justification for it.[46] Through repeated uses children are taught the use of the word 'pain.' The children also learn the similarities and differences with regard to physical pain, mental pain, pain at the suffering/death of a loved one, etc. They also learn about the similarities and differences among the use of words 'you,' 'I,' 'he,' 'she,' 'they,' etc. What they learn is not the sum total of what was taught. They understand that one does not speak univocally, but analogically in these occasions. In Wittgensteinian terms, the children learn that 'This and similar things are called 'pain' and that 'you,' 'I', he,' 'she,' 'they,' etc. are used to speak about human beings.' He sees connexions and judges accordingly. According to Cavell, 'Persons who cannot use words, or gestures, in these ways with you may yet be in your world, but perhaps not of your flesh.'[47] They have different nature, nurture and culture. 'We cannot find our feet with them,'[48] Wittgenstein would say.

4. The Person: Product and Project of Grace

Persons are not only product and project of nature and community, but also product and project of grace. By faith, I am a Christian and by culture, I am an Indian.[49] Being a Christian and being an Indian are fundamental dimensions of my life. They provide the system of co-ordinates that make me who I am. I see myself as a product of nature and nurture sustained by God and the project of my life is to work in the world, build up the community and walk toward God freely and faithfully. There are indispensable personal and communitarian, natural and cultural dimensions. Though born into a culture and nurtured accordingly, I have to live critically and creatively my life as a person. All those who nurtured me – parents, sisters, brothers, priests, nuns, teachers and friends – can only show the way, I have to walk on my feet. It is not primarily a question of understanding the meaning of life but living accordingly. I see religious significance in my life in the world and my religious point of view gives meaning to my life and shapes the stream of my life, my way

[46]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, eds., Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, 624-628.

[47]Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 189.

[48]*Wir können uns nicht in sie finden* literally means we cannot find us in them. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, part II, 223.

[49]Being an Indian or a Christian are also polychrome perspectives; a number of fibres interweave to provide an *übersicht* of Indian or Christian.

of being fully human. Living in contact with God makes me strong and helps me to realise my potentialities more fully.

It is part of my philosophical vision sustained by faith that Jesus Christ, by his death on the cross, transformed the cross, a torture instrument, into the source of life and now I see my threefold relationship with God, community and the world in the symbol of a cross. I am rooted in nature, formed by nurture and sustained by God; positively I act upon the world, build up the community and move towards God. From a Wittgensteinian point of view, this is the picture by which I live, move and have my being. This picture (the symbol of the cross and its symbolic meaning) is constantly before me, influences my decisions and forms the stream of my life. My being human is described in terms of these fundamental existential relations. The symbol of Christianity thus becomes the symbol of my self-realisation.

From the Indian point of view, this is both *atmavidya* (self knowledge) and *atmasakshatkara* (self realisation). This vision of life I find expressed in the Vedic concept of *ṛta*, denoting the harmonious inter-relationship between gods, humans and nature. All these three are equally co-responsible to safeguard and keep up the *ṛtas* in other realms. Humans protect and nourish the animal and plant worlds, these in turn produce sustenance for people; people offer these things in sacrifice to gods, and gods in turn protect the other two realities. None of these three entities, according to the Vedic vision, is superior or inferior to another in the triad. Only the unified and goal oriented involvement and activities of these three guarantee the universal harmony. Maintaining and promoting the *rta* thus becomes my *dharma* (duty, religion).

I see myself at the meeting point of the horizontal and vertical bars of the cross. The lower part of the vertical bar shows my rootedness in nature. I depend on the nature for my being and becoming. I live by the fruits of nature. According to one Biblical tradition the first human being is created from the earth. The name of the first man, Adam is related to the Hebrew word for ground, *adamah*. According to the Book of *Genesis*, God formed Adam from *adamah* (2.7) and placed him on *adamah* 'to work on it and take care of it' (2.15). Though I am from the nature, live by the fruits of nature and when I die, return to it, I carry within me the breath of God; that's what makes me a living human being (2.7). That indicates that I am not merely a product of nature and that I should never be a slave to the material world; rather I should master it and live on it according to God's plan. I have a certain power over my life on earth. At this level of nature,

ṛta points to the fundamental and intrinsic law of nature: the powers of nature – the elements, the heavenly bodies like sun, moon and stars – function in an orderly manner; the seasons of the year appear in the appointed time and manner. All these together with the human beings contribute to the cosmic harmony. The law and order, which is also called *rta*, in the agricultural activities in tune with the recurring seasons of the year. There is an inner law and dynamism in the earth, in the process of cultivation, in the seeds and plants, and in the growth and fruit bearing of the plants. If there is a harmonious blending of all these elements, the harvest is abundant, which in turn gladdens the lives of the people. This is the ontological extension of *ṛta* in the daily life and activities of humans. *Ṛta* here alludes to two things: it is the inner dynamism and equilibrium which are intrinsic to the powers of nature; and it is also the harmonious way of manifestations of these cosmic powers, and effects of these powers in nature. From the Christian point of view, my relationship to nature is that of creative stewardship. It is given to me to realise myself and to work on it, to maintain and to develop. I work on nature and transform it for my well-being, for the benefit of others and for the glory of God.

The upper part of the cross symbolises my dependence on and orientation to God. I totally depend on God for my being and becoming. I see myself as a creature, servant and child. Absolute obedience in faith is required of me. God decides what is good and bad; I have to follow it and live according to His commands. That's the purpose of my life: In Him I live, move and have my being. When I try to make my life independent of and against the will of God, I am moving away from the purpose of my life; I am committing a sin. Sin is, according to this view, a futile attempt at self-realisation without reference to God and fellow human beings. As I turn away from God, I distort the harmony (*rta*) of my relationship to nature and to fellow human beings. In the Biblical story of the first sin, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and hid from him; they turned against each other and the work on the ground became hard and the earth produced only thorns and thistles. Instead of bringing blessings on one another and on earth, they brought curses. The cross by restoring those relations brings back, once again, the blessings on humankind and on nature.

The horizontal bar of the cross shows my solidarity and friendship with my fellow human beings. According to the Biblical story in the book of Genesis, the second human being, Eve is formed from the body of the first human being, Adam. When God brought Eve before Adam, he said: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called

woman, for she was taken out of man' (2.23). God created Eve as a suitable helper and fitting partner for Adam. They are equal in dignity and mutually support each other to live in harmony on earth bringing blessings on the world for the Glory of God. Because God is the Father of all human beings and I am one of his children, all others are my sisters and brothers. I am formed by nurture and contribute to the well-being of the community. It becomes my religious duty to love and care for them – especially those who are in need, materially, emotionally and spiritually. When I move away from this religious duty, I am turning against both God and my fellow human beings. This would distort God's image in me and I move away from God bringing curses rather than blessing on myself, others and on the world. Ideally, I receive blessings from God and become a blessing to others on earth. I become what I am through my substantial and creative presence in the world, as a product and project of nature, nurture and culture, sustained by God.

5. Conclusion

Since from a Wittgensteinian point of view, working in philosophy is working on oneself, 'On how one sees things,'[50] I have presented how I see my life as a person. Nature and society are partners in the project of *atmasakshatkara*, which cannot be realised without nurture and grace of God. From a Christian point of view, it is the grace of God that designed this project and makes *atmaskshatkara* a possible reality. The picture of *atmasakshatkara*, that I have sketched in this paper is a joint venture of nature and society and gets its final sanction in my relation with God. I believe, together with Wittgenstein, that a human being who is in relation to God is more complete.[51]

What is emphasised here is the logical point that a person's relation to the body, mind, nature, community and God belong to different language-games and they interweave to give meaning to the life of a person in the web of life. Belonging to a community is part of becoming person. Though to become fully human one need not necessarily be surrounded by others, a person must be open to others; one cannot remain a private individual. Here, care is taken not to reduce the individual into a community or to separate the individual from nature and community. The

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[50]Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, G. H. von Wright, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998, 24.

[51]*Ein Wesen, das mit Gott Verbindung steht, ist Stark.* Wittgenstein, *Nachlass*, MS 183.56, CD Version.

person is not just a living body or a bundle of perceptions, thoughts or judgements but is a living human being actively and creatively engaging in varying relations with God, community and world. The world becomes a human world, rather than a biological environment. 'The world as I found it'[52] is 'the world I live in' in conversation and collaboration with other persons. From a religious point of view, I live in 'God's world,' the handwork of God, and it is given to me to realise my potentialities – to become fully human and to have life in its fullness together with other persons. From this religious point of view, a person is rooted and acting in the world, formed by and extended to the community, and sustained by and oriented to God.

[52]Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, C. K. Ogden, trans., London: Routledge, 1922, 5.631.

BOOK REVIEWS

G. C. Nayak, *Selected Episodes from Raghuvamsam of Kalidas* (Value-Oriented Education Series, General Editor: Kireet Joshi), Auroville, Pondicherry: Shubhra Ketu Foundation and the Mother's Institute of Research, 2010, pages 103.

The learned monograph *Selected Episodes from the Raghuvamsam of Kalidasa* by the great literary critic G. C. Nayak, is published as part of the monographs entitled *Value-Oriented Education Series*. The *Raghuvamsa* has been studied from a number of other perspectives like its poetic beauty, its similes, its characterization, its language and style but not, as far as I am aware, from the perspective of the value that it highlights, the values that it seeks to project directly or indirectly for the sustenance of society. It starts with the enunciation of qualities, the manifestations of the values, in the context of Dilipa, the first king with the description of whom starts the work. In this it is remarkably similar to its *upajivya kavya*, the *Ramayana* of Valmiki which also starts with the delineation of the qualities, in its case, of Rama in the form of the question that he, Valmiki, asks Narada who happens to visit his *Asrama*. Valmiki is curious to know if there is a person in his time, *sampratam*, in the world, *loke*, who combines in him certain qualities, he enumerates them one by one, the enumeration stopping at the figure of sixteen. He is curious to know of such a person from Narada because Narada is cognizant of the goings on in the worlds. Narada knows that the qualities that Valmiki has enumerated (that he would like to see in his ideal man) are rare, *durlabhah*. He also is clear that Valmiki's enumeration is not the last word about qualities. There could be, as indeed there are, many more, *bahavah*. With alacrity, *prahrstah*, he proceeds to recount them in the person of Rama of the Iksvaku family who among the teeming millions of India of his time has all of them and many more, his enumeration going up to the figure of sixty seven!

In fifteen cantos of the nineteen ones of the work it is the story of five kings of the Raghu's race: Dilipa, Raghu, Aja, Dasaratha and Rama. All of them are shown as paragons of virtues, each one upholding the highest values. G. C. Nayak has his gaze fixed on them. Their actions he has analysed with clinical precision and divined the values that guided them in going in for them setting thus the most exacting standards for following the correct path not allowing their subjects to swerve even to the extent of a line from; *rekhaamatram api.*

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G. C. Nayak's work comes as a breath of fresh air in the midst of the weather-beaten old air in the form of the many repetitive studies on Kalidasa. This time it is *Raghuvamsa* study by him from the point of values. Next time let us hope it could be *Kumarasambhava* or some other work of the master poet from the same viewpoint.

Critics may pardon me if I record my uneasiness with one aspect of the work. It does not carry on its cover the name of the author. Instead it is the name of the General Editor of the Series. Perhaps G. C. Nayak was too much driven by the Kalidasan value of self-effacement who allowed his name to appear in only two of his works out of the seven and that too casually.

G. C. Nayak deserves full plaudits for breaking a new path which the future generations could well follow. He holds a facile pen. May it continue rolling on pages after pages!

Satya Vrat Shastri

P. C. Chandrasekharan, *Understanding the Universe: From the Quantum World of the Infinitesimal to the Cosmic Realm of the Infinite*, New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2011, pages xvi + 279, ISBN: 978-81-8220-422-5.

Now a days, cosmology and related discussions draw much attention, owing to several reasons. One important reason among them is that many are curious to understand the past and the future of the universe in which we live. Religious circles are also anxious about the developments in science, especially those in Cosmology, Bio-technology, etc. Consequently, there are various hypotheses, theories, and predictions, which are at the same time contradicting and debatable. Generally speaking, academic books in science never touch the humanitarian relevance of learning the subject. Such books present certain facts for the purpose of academic study and research and will be much alienated from human life. Of course, there may be certain authors who examine humanitarian aspects and interdisciplinary dimensions of science. In most of the cases, however, their scientific basis will be very shallow and conceptual understanding very poor. In this context, the work of Chandrasekharan has a unique position with its deep insights in the subject and a balanced and inclusive approach to controversies and debates.

From the title itself it is clear that the book throws light into the microscopic as well as the macroscopic aspects of the universe. The author tries to unravel the kinetics of the wonderful world inside an atom, namely,

the quantum world. At same time, he takes us to the mysteries involved in the origin of this universe and invites us to think about the dynamics of the movement of the celestial bodies. The book presents before us the development of cosmology till now which include the Big Bang, galactic formation, dark matter, unification of forces of nature, observational cosmology, and various models of the universe. It also exposes before the reader the possibility of life beyond the earth, an outline on the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the mechanics of cosmic evolution, etc., which are certainly topics of current interest.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the necessary initiation into the subjects with a review of various schools of thought dealing with the origin of the Universe, giving due importance to the currently popular Big Bang theory. In the next two chapters, the very fundamentals of physics such as atom and forces of nature are dealt with. It is much appreciable because the reader can learn or refresh quickly these basics which are essential to have a sound understanding of cosmology. The remaining chapters in general outline the various nuances of the formation of present universe followed by the Big Bang. Determining the nature of dark matter is one of the central problems of cosmology today. Chapter 8 focuses on Dark Matter and Dark Energy. Dark matter and dark energy still remain mysteries to science and the author gives conceptual clarity for these. Also we are offered clarity on certain misconceptions related to recession of galaxies, speed of light, the time before the Big Bang, space-time manifold, etc. Chapter 9 gets special attention as it deals with the possibility of extra-terrestrial life. Though reasonably we can arrive at the conclusion that there is life beyond our earth, the disappointing factor is that communication between such planets and human beings on the earth seems impossible as they are at distances of several hundreds of light years.

Now, the scientific world is eagerly waiting for the details of Higgs particle (Higgs bosons) or divine particle. Let us not forget that this particle has nothing to do with the Divine. It is only a name given to a fundamental particle when its presence was proposed as a hypothesis. It is said that LHC experiments succeeded in unravelling the secrets of the Higgs particle which is responsible for the mass of matter. The details of the LHC experiment are yet to be disclosed. Chapter 10 presents a good sketch about the Higgs particle based on the so far available information. Observation, analysis and modelling of the cosmological data are very crucial to the development of cosmology. The remaining chapters discuss these issues in detail.

The summary given at the end of each chapter is laudable. The subject matter is presented without rigorous mathematical treatment. However, we find very important and necessary mathematical illustrations and derivations for those readers who are interested in such things. Skipping such derivations will not affect the continuity and flow of ideas. So, anybody with an elementary background of physics could follow the book. Certainly, very essential mathematical illustrations such as Schrodinger equation, expectation values of quantum mechanics, relativistic effects on mass length and time, mass energy equivalence, black body radiation, etc., are given as appendices. So, anyone who wants to learn advanced cosmology can have sufficient inputs of basic physics. Another important thing is that the author keeps a balance in matters of dispute where religion and science appear as rivals. The best example is chapter 12 where the author discusses the nuances of cosmic creation. Towards the end, while concluding the discussions, the author provides the necessary basis for an interface between science and spirituality. He never takes the side of either science or religion but analyzes the issues objectively and rationally. At the same time, the author guides the reader beyond the observable and the measurable parameters of physical world. He inspires us to honestly see the reality that exists beyond the scope of scientific or technological methods.

The author's very personal reflection given as epilogue deals with the transformation we need to have in our attitude and approach to life. The splendor of this universe is beyond our perception. In the space scale, our planet is only a speck of dust when we look at this vast universe. In the cosmic time scale, our existence vanishes in the mere twinkling of an eye. In this scenario, our ego problems and the issues we create such as terrorism, political and religious conflicts, personal grudges, etc., are totally irrelevant and appear as stupidities. Our fear of death is insignificant. If one meditates on this universe and try to grasp its picture one will become humble and broadminded.

This work is a help for those want to pursue higher studies in cosmology. The book presents wide knowledge on cosmology along with sufficient insights into the depth of each topic. Also this work will be an asset and an unbiased guide for interdisciplinary studies, especially that between science and spirituality. The book is the result of proper understanding of the subjects followed by a deep reflection and internalization. So, it challenges us to learn, think, and ponder over cosmology.

Gregory Malayil

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